

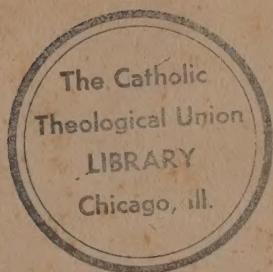
SPIRITISM UNVEILED

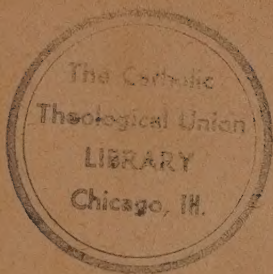
D. I. LANSLOTS, O.S.B.



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SPIRITISM UNVEILED

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JACOBUS AUGUSTINUS,

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SPIRITISM UNVEILED

A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF SOME
ABNORMAL PSYCHIC PHENOMENA

BY

D. I. LANSLOTS, O.S.B.

PREFECT APOSTOLIC OF NORTHERN TRANSVAAL



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PREFACE

THE intervention of the supernatural is one of the most universal and constant facts in the world. Never was there a religion, nor is there any now, which does not credit to itself visions and revelations, or other ways of communication with beings of another world. The history of each nation records prophecies of the future, the unveiling of impenetrable secrets, and the knowledge of distant happenings. Wonders are apparently so common as to furnish the spontaneous explanation of extraordinary events.

The universal consent of the human race admits the existence of the supernatural; error and deceit cannot be the only foundation of this consent. It is impossible that the human intellect, naturally inclined towards the truth, could be so led astray; no amount of fraud and jugglery could produce an impression so enduring on the human mind. For the Christian the question assumes a more defined aspect. He admits two essentially distinct and

separable orders, the natural and the supernatural; he admits the one on the strength of the evidences furnished by the senses, and the other on the authority of a special revelation. God has vouchsafed to unite man with his first cause, the source of his being and the final purpose of his existence, by ties far stronger than nature can forge. The voice of conscience continually reminds him of this union. The Christian, therefore, is fully prepared to admit in this world a few supernatural facts; he believes even in a faith, a law, a life, entirely supernatural.

The supernatural undoubtedly serves a purpose which can be no other than to lead man to God.

Man meets with many obstacles, however, and encounters cruel enemies, who endeavour with all their might to prevent him from attaining his end. We all know our three great enemies, each of whom contends to destroy in us the idea of the supernatural. The flesh tries to lower man to the level of the brute; the world rebels against mystery and miracle, because it measures the order of things by the span of its own intelligence; the devil continues in his endeavour to raise himself on the throne of the Almighty in the hearts of men. To effect this he assumes the appearances of the angel

of light, and by means of a deceitful supernatural, draws man into his net of superstition and false worship. Materialism is the offspring of the flesh, rationalism of the world, pseudo-thaumaturgy of the devil; the common goal of all is paganism. It matters little how man is led to a denial of divine revelation, the result is the same; it is in the end the worship of the creature substituted for the worship of God.

The worst enemy of the supernatural is not the one who openly denies it, but the one who presents a spurious imitation of it. Materialism may catch in its snares a few votaries of the ordinary type, it may be the speculative error taking possession of a less discerning mind, but it can never be a scientific error in Christian society. The danger is more insidious and consequently more serious in rationalism, as it is susceptible of a more scientific form than materialism, and flatters the strongest passion in man—his pride. To our mind, the worst enemy to revelation is the false wonder-worker. He was able to subjugate almost the whole world to pagan superstition, he still holds sway over the greater part of Asia and Africa, and he reigns supreme even in nations which are not devoid of culture.

Human reason can successfully combat materialism, and even rationalism, but it is not provided with the weapons required to fight the third enemy; it needs the help of a higher order.

The great danger which spiritism offers is its very attractiveness. Its theories at first sight arouse no suspicion; it covers itself with a mantle of the last fashion. The spirits accommodate themselves to the wishes of all; their courtesy explains the rapid development of spiritism all over the world. The seed of spiritism fell on fertile soil. Freedom of thought in matters of faith brought forth the denial of the supernatural; belief based on the testimony of the senses supplanted Christian faith in the minds of millions, and disposed them for the reception of spiritism, because it certainly does appeal to the senses. Spiritism for them is at first a pastime, next a temptation, and finally a necessity.

In this treatise, far from denying the manifestations of spiritism, we shall endeavour to establish their historical reality. After admitting their existence, we shall examine their efficient cause or causes. Only two hypotheses seem possible to explain the facts. We must attribute them either to mere natural causes, or to a supernatural

agency. If evidence compels us to exclude the first hypothesis, we must necessarily accept the second; there is no alternative. In examining the first, we must consider the explanations offered by its patrons, and we shall see that, instead of throwing light on the question, they make confusion worse confounded. This, however, is not sufficient evidence to warrant us in looking to the supernatural for an explanation; we must be satisfied beforehand that no other satisfactory explanation can be presented in the future. This will give us a negative solution of the problem, and show what the spiritistic facts are not. One theory is left, then, viz. spiritism is the work of the spirits. The question then resolves itself into this: who are the efficient causes of the spiritistic manifestations, the good or the evil spirits? We shall leave it to the reader to judge for himself, after he has examined the evidence presented in this volume.

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SPIRITISM UNVEILED

CHAPTER I

IS SPIRITISM ANYTHING NEW?

SPIRITISM is a very old theory under a new name. The word was coined about half a century ago, but the facts and the doctrines to which the name has been applied are almost as old as humanity itself. At different times and places in the world's history the doctrine went under different names. Spiritism is one more proof of the truth of Solomon's saying: "There is nothing new under the sun." In the remotest antiquity people believed, as they do now, in the real relations between the living and the dead, and also in the relations of the departed with other immaterial spirits of a higher order. The history of ages gone by fully confirms this statement. We will begin by proving the assertion with the testimony of the Bible, regarded as God's word by the Christian, and as a book of the highest historical value by the non-Christian.

We find in chapters seven and eight of Exodus an explicit illustration of the enchantments then in vogue among the Egyptians. Moses and Aaron were sent by God on a mission to Pharaoh, to implore permission for the children of Israel to leave the land of Egypt. They confirmed their mission by miracles in the presence of Pharaoh and his court. Aaron turned his rod into a serpent, and the water of the river into blood. Pharaoh called his magicians, and by their Egyptian enchantments they did in like manner. The contest was repeated in various ways, until in the end the magicians were outdone.

Spiritistic practices must have been very common among the Hebrews of old, because not only does the Bible often speak of magicians, soothsayers, fortune-tellers, and the like, but evocations of the dead are frequently mentioned and condemned.

These magicians, soothsayers, fortune-tellers, and enchanters correspond exactly with the mediums of modern spiritism. "Go not aside after wizards, neither ask anything of soothsayers to be defiled by them. I am the Lord." (Lev. xix. 31.)

"The soul that shall go aside after magicians and soothsayers, and shall commit fornication with them, I will set my face against that soul and

destroy it out of the midst of the people.” (Lev. xx. 6.)

“ A man or a woman in whom there is a pythonical or devising spirit, dying let them die; they shall stone them, their blood be upon them.” (Lev. xx. 27.)

A legislation so severe, punishments apparently so excessive, find their explanation in a widespread and damnable practice to be repressed at all cost.

In the book of Deuteronomy (xviii. 10-12) we read: “ Neither let there be found among you anyone . . . that consulteth soothsayers . . . neither let there be any wizard, nor charmer, nor anyone that consulteth pythonic spirits, or fortune-tellers, or that seeketh the truth from the dead. For the Lord abhorreth all these things.”

The evocation of Samuel’s spirit at Saul’s request enables us to assist at a spiritistic séance, similar in its details to one of the present day. The facts are recorded in the first book of Kings (xxviii. 7-25). Saul was about to engage in a great battle with the Philistines. The enemy was in sight; Saul wished to know his prospects of success. Had Samuel been living, he might have consulted God; but Samuel was dead, the odds were against Saul. In his anxiety and desperation the thought struck him to evoke the spirit of Samuel in order to ascertain his destiny. Saul ordered his servants

to find a witch, a woman "that hath a divining spirit." They reported the presence of one in Endor. Without delay Saul disguised himself, put on other clothes, and, accompanied by two men, went out by night to meet the woman.

Saul opened the conversation: "Divine to me by thy divining spirit and bring me up him whom I shall tell thee." The woman did not recognise Saul, and fearing that she might be reported to the King and be killed, hesitated, for Saul had previously dealt very severely with the magicians and the evocators of the spirits. He assured her, therefore, with an oath, that no harm should be done to her.

Satisfied with these assurances, the woman said to Saul: "Whom shall I bring up to thee?" The King answered: "Bring me up Samuel." The woman called up Samuel, and the prophet suddenly appeared. At the sight of Samuel the woman cried out with a loud voice to Saul: "Why hast thou deceived me, for thou art Saul?" Saul bade her not to fear, but to tell him what she saw. "I saw," says the woman, "God ascending out of the earth." The Hebrew text has *elohim*, that is, a preternatural being, ascending out of the earth. "What form is he of?" asked Saul. The woman replied: "An old man, and he is covered with a mantle." Saul recognised Samuel

in the description, bowed to the ground, and adored him. Saul questioned Samuel about the result of the battle in which he was about to engage with the Philistines. Samuel assured him that the Lord had rejected him, and that the next day he and his sons would be with him. At these words of the spirit Saul was frightened, and he fell to the ground. The woman and her servants succeeded with difficulty in persuading Saul to take a morsel of bread to recover his strength. This ended the spiritistic séance. Saul left the same night, and the next day he and his sons fell under the charge of the Philistines. How simple and yet how wonderful!

Isaiah clearly alludes to spiritistic practices in chap. viii. v. 19. He thus expressed himself: "When they shall say to you: Seek of pythons and of diviners, who mutter in their enchantments: Should not the people seek of their God, for the living of the dead?"

In the New Testament also we read of a few spiritistic facts. The apostles often found themselves face to face with magicians and soothsayers, who tried to imitate their wonders and contradict their doctrine. In chapter eight of the Acts we read that Simon the magician was looked upon by the people of Jerusalem as a great medium. The people thought that the power of God was in him.

Such also were Bar-Jesus and Elymas at Salamina. (Acts xiii.) The Jewish exorcists, and especially the seven sons of Sceva, tried to pose as mediums, and attempted their power over the demons in the name of Jesus (Acts xiii.). When St Paul stopped at Thyatira, in the house of Lydia, a seller of purple, he frequently met on the streets a certain girl having a pythonical spirit; she brought in much gain to her masters by divining. The girl, following Paul and his companion—Timothy—cried out publicly: “These men are the servants of the most high God, who preach unto you the way of salvation.” God permitted, perhaps commanded the spirit to bear testimony to the truth. Paul was grieved, and taking pity on the poor girl, he said to the spirit: “I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ, to go out from her.” The spirit went out and left her free, much to the displeasure of those who lost thereby a great source of income. (Acts xvi.) The above quotations, taken from an authoritative source like the Bible, are sufficient to show that spiritism is indeed nothing new.

When we consult pagan history, we find the same uniformity among historians in recording spiritistic relations of the living with the dead. The old Romans had their spiritistic practices, as also their evocations of the spirits. Virgil, in the sixth book of his “Æneid,” speaks of Æneas, who

descended into Hades to consult with the ghost of Anchises. Cicero tells us how his friend Appius frequently consulted the dead, and how, on the Lake of Avernus, near Arpino, the still bleeding ghosts of the dead often appeared in the darkness. Pliny tells us that Tiberius ordered Libo Drusus to be put to death because he had disturbed him while he was calling up the spirits. Suetonius relates that Augustus ordered more than two thousand books, treating of enchantments, to be burned. The Romans, in the fourth century of the Christian era, had their turning tables or onigibords; this is proved by the fact that Patrick and Hilary were condemned to death for having demanded from a table the name of the Emperor Valens' successor. They explained to the judge how they had made use of a table, on the borders of which they had written the letters of the alphabet; in the centre there was a ring suspended from a ribbon. After the ritualistic conjurations the ring began to move, and stopped successively on the letters *t*, *h*, *e*; they concluded that the successor would be Theodore, and did not continue the experiment. Subsequently Theodore was killed, and Valens' successor was the Spaniard, Theodosius. Many other writers, such as Stanius, Lucianus, Celsius, etc., certify to these spiritistic practices among the Romans.

In ancient Greece the oracles of the dead were continually sought. Homer, in his "Odyssey," describes how Ulysses, upon the advice and the instructions of the woman magician, Circe, interrogated the ghosts of his own mother, and of very many other dead and famous persons. The Greeks were wont to call up the spirits of the dead on the borders of the Acheron, at Tigalin, in Arcadia, at Cape Tenaros, and at a few other places. Those whose business it was to evocate the spirits were called necromancers. It was not only the common people who, in search of information, had recourse to the oracles of the dead. One of the seven wise men of Greece sent to consult the spirit of his wife, whose death he had caused. Pausanias evocated the spirit of a young girl whom he had caused to be murdered; later on the magistrates called up the spirit of Pausanias himself.

At all times, even to the present day, the calling forth of the spirits and the moving of the tables were common practices among the Chinese. The philosophy of Alexandria, which flourished in the first centuries of Christianity, and which Julian the Apostate endeavoured to substitute for Christianity itself, admitted as a fundamental principle the evocation of the spirits.

Among the barbarous nations of Europe in olden times spiritism was very common; with the

Druids of Gaul, as also with the people of Northern Europe.

Tertullian, in his "Apology," clearly indicates the various practices which the spiritists of to-day endeavour to revive. He speaks of seats and beating, or talking tables, in places where the diviners of his time had their recourse to the demons; he speaks of the visions called up by them, as also of the materialisations of the spirits; he even mentions the frauds which the diviners then mixed with their practices.

The Gnostics, spreading the ideas of their leaders, especially of Philo and of the compilers of the *Talmud*, gave a strong impulse to the diffusion of spiritistic practices.

On the American continent, the Redskins, who seem to represent the last remnants of one of the oldest human races, had a spiritistic ritual peculiar to themselves. The reports of the first travellers among them show how common spiritistic practices were with them.

During the Middle Ages spiritistic practices continued, promoted chiefly by the Gnostics. Witches, fortune-tellers, and diviners were very common, and although imagination, nervous diseases, and other causes must have been potent factors at that time, yet the evocation of spirits and possessions were positive facts. In the twelfth

and thirteenth centuries the practices of spiritism were turned into a sort of cult, a combination of a philosophical as well as of a religious character. Cantù tells us how every astrologer and alchemist gloried in having a familiar spirit submissive to all his whims. Michel Scotus (1210-1295) invited friends to a banquet. He had not made any preparations for it, but behold the table loaded with delicacies! The host added: "This choice bit comes from the kitchen of the King of England; this bottle is from the cellar of the King of France." Dante gives him a special place in his "Inferno" (Canto xx.) and says of him that he truly knew the joke of magical frauds. In the Middle Ages so strong was the conviction of human relationship with the spirits, that precisely on the strength of that conviction so many guilty ones, as well as a great many unfortunates under suspicion of being witches, enchanters, diviners, or necromancers, were condemned to death.

Taken all in all, during the Middle Ages the question of witches, magicians, and necromancers was so much spoken of and discussed, so much of it was held as beyond discussion, so many legal procedures were instituted against them, and so bitter was the feeling against those accused of divining, that we may justly conclude that at no time in the world's history were the practices of

spiritism more common than in the Middle Ages.

During the Renaissance period spiritism had indeed lost some of its hold on the masses, but, among the people generally, and among the savants of the time, there survived the belief in the possibility and the reality of relations between the living and the spirits, as also the souls of the departed. The enchantments and divinations so often described in the poems of Ariosto and Tasso, and the scene of necromancy one night in the Colosseum so well depicted by Cellini from personal impressions in his "Life," prove clearly that in the sixteenth century, although secretly, efforts were made to call up the spirits of the departed.

In the library Vittorio Emmanuele, in Rome, may be seen a document sworn to by a nobleman, Dominic Denna (forty years old), a knight of the Holy Sepulchre, and highly esteemed in Rome. The document is undoubtedly of the seventeenth century. The investigation which it records was ordered by Innocent XI. and conducted by Cardinal Carpegna, and refers to a spiritistic apparition, which seemed substantiated beyond all doubt.

Up to 1750, or even a little later, the records of discussions in the various Parliaments, and the laws emanating from these bodies against the divers

kinds of spiritism, plainly show their existence, especially in England, Switzerland, and Germany.

At the time of the French Revolution, the era of materialism began. It led to a general scepticism about everything, and denied also the existence of spiritism and the possibility of entering into communication with the spirits of the other world; the possibility even was looked upon as entirely unscientific. After the French Revolution, and as a result of it, little or nothing was said about spiritism until new facts and new manifestations attracted universal attention and here begins the real modern spiritism.

CHAPTER II

MODERN SPIRITISM

THE breath of unbelief, which spread like wildfire over the world after the latter half of the eighteenth century, rejected whatever had been handed down regarding the relation between man and spirit. Science thought it had said the last word on the subject; it explained all the spiritistic phenomena away by showing up their analogy with certain morbid phenomena; spiritism seemed condemned to eternal oblivion. But unexpected events proved how unfounded was this modern absolute unbelief, how premature were the conclusions established in the name of science, and gave a new lease of life to spiritism.

In 1846 at Hydesville, in the State of New York, lived a man by the name of Michel Weckmann. He frequently heard knocks at his door, opened, but saw no one. Weckmann grew so tired of it that he was compelled to leave the house. The next occupants were a family of German ex-

traction, and members of the Methodist Episcopal Church; they had moved in December, 1847, to Hydesville, in Wayne County. The family was composed of John Fox, his wife, and their three daughters. Among the daughters two deserve special mention—Margaret, aged fifteen, and Catherine, aged twelve. Their acquaintances have invariably testified to the exemplary conduct of this family, and considered them absolutely trustworthy. No one has ever attempted to question their declarations.

The family had hardly settled in their new home when the oldest of the girls married. Not long after the marriage noises began to be heard suddenly on the walls, on the ceiling, in the rooms adjoining the living apartments. In the rooms whence the noise proceeded the furniture was often found to have been moved or upset, although no stranger could enter them. The two girls often felt—especially at night—the contact of invisible hands on their body. All the care and diligence on the part of the householders to discover and understand the causes of these singular events proved useless. They began to suspect some vulgar joke on the part of the neighbours. Finally they concluded that it could not be anything but the work of the devil. Little by little the Foxes got used to these noises and strange events, which,

however disturbing, were physically harmless. The girls began to laugh at their supposed author, whom they gave the name of Cloven-hoof.

One evening, while little Catherine was diverting herself by snapping her fingers, the thought struck her to invite the mysterious author of these domestic noises to do the same. At the same moment a similar noise was repeated an equal number of times. The girl, astonished at the feat, made a few more almost noiseless movements with her fingers, and, to her great surprise, she noticed that to each movement of her hands corresponded a similar audible movement from an unknown origin. The little girl then called her mother, and told her that the author of these noises had not only ears to hear, but also eyes to see.

Catherine's mother, not less surprised than her daughter, invited the mysterious author to count up to ten, and immediately ten knocks were heard. To several questions an intelligent answer was given by a certain number of knocks. When at the end Mrs Fox desired to know whether the author was really a spirit, a few clear and rapid knocks evidently meant an affirmative reply.

The neighbours were called in to verify the reality of the facts as we have related them. All had the explicit and repeated assurance that the mysterious author was a spirit. Thus was modern

spiritism born in America. The adherents of spiritism soon learned how to establish communication with the supposed author of these singular phenomena by means of a conventional language based upon a number of knocks. We shall see later that other means of communication were subsequently found. The first witnesses of the events at Hydesville noticed also that the communication with the so-called spirit was more prompt and sure when one of the Fox girls, especially little Catherine, assisted at the séances. They concluded that the spirit had a special sympathy for certain persons, or that certain persons had a special power over the spirits. At any rate there was no doubt but that the communications with the supposed spirit were more easily established with certain subjects than with others. Those who succeeded best in establishing the communication with the spirit were called *mediums*; the capacity to fill the office was called *mediumnity*.

When the existence and importance of mediums were duly recognised, efforts were made to reproduce elsewhere the singular phenomena observed in the Fox home. The attempts were crowned with success; the conviction soon took root that these communications were possible with some, with many, perhaps even with all the spirits.

Then they sought to converse with the souls of prominent people, and of the departed dear to them. The spirits, on the other hand, showed themselves very complacent, desirous even of entering into sensible relations with the living. Instructions were given by them to facilitate evocations and communications, with earnest entreaties to establish spiritistic circles and reunions.

The mediums became daily more numerous, and spiritistic practices went on increasing accordingly.

The Fox family, however, continued to hold first place among the mediums. The Foxes considered themselves as entrusted with the mission to spread the knowledge of the spiritistic phenomena; the privilege conferred upon them by the spirits proved of course a financial advantage to them.

Whether as a result of the war declared against them by the Methodist Episcopal pastor of Hydesville, who found the practices of spiritism contrary to religion, or owing to the continued annoyance of unwelcome visitors, the Foxes decided to leave Hydesville to go and live with their married daughter, Mrs Fisch, at Rochester. Mrs Fisch herself was reputed a medium of the first class; but as a result of it, she got a divorce from Fisch to marry Brown. The spirits followed the Fox family to Rochester, and continued their revela-

tions, either by prearranged alphabetic signs, or by articulated words and phrases. The spirits, always unknown and invisible, improved on the past, and began to play the piano, and every other kind of instrument. The phenomena of the turning tables was reproduced in the following manner. One day, in 1849, Mrs Fox with her two daughters and two other persons were engaged in conversation, casually resting their hands upon the table around which they were sitting, when all of a sudden the table moved, and rose in the air to the height of six feet.

One of those present thought of saying: "Will the spirit bring back the table to its place?" Immediately the table was lowered into its place. This unexpected feat brought their enthusiasm and their joy to such a pitch that they fell on their knees and intoned a song of thanks, in which the table took part by beating time with its legs.

Serious men, Protestant pastors, newspaper men, priests, civil officers, all interested in real science, busied themselves without delay about the curious phenomenon. The greater part of these critics were convinced of the reality of the phenomena, and of their spiritistic nature; they felt sure that they were not being imposed upon. Names such as Rev. Mr. Hammond, Judge Simons, Judge John Edmunds, Dr Dexter, Dr Mapes, pro-

fessor of chemistry at the University of Pennsylvania, and his colleague, Dr Robert Hare, are a sufficient guarantee of the absence of fraud.

In the beginning of 1852 the first evangelist of spiritism left the United States on a mission to Europe, and landed in Scotland. Converts were soon made, and these spread after a while in England, Germany, and Russia. It appears that the new missionaries in Russia found that the spiritistic practices were already known, and generally resorted to among the Mongols, and in a great part of Asiatic Siberia, a relic of the religions of the old Orient. The apostles of spiritism were everywhere well received, and made numerous converts.

Spiritism was simultaneously imported into France from England and Germany, and toward the end of April, 1853, experiments were made at the same time in Paris, Strasbourg, Marseilles, Toulon, and Bordeaux.

About 1858, from England and France, spiritism penetrated into Italy, at first under cover of darkness, afterwards openly, when the breeze of liberty began to blow over the various regions of that sunny land.

As in America, so also in Europe, the spiritistic practices greatly excited people's minds. While the greatest number looked upon them as children's

plays, produced by madness or fraud, others began to carefully examine their real nature. As in America, so also in Europe, did some real savants make them the object of a serious study, and while they discovered in the spiritistic practices some of the vilest humbug for the purpose of mystification and filthy lucre, they began scrutinising the real, undeniable facts. The general public pronounced spiritism a huge imposture on account of the frauds which had come to light, yet spiritism went on spreading in various parts of the world, developing and perfecting itself.

The task of presenting spiritism to the world in a more or less scientific way fell to the lot of a Frenchman, who upon the advice and the revelation of the spirit changed his name from Leon Hippolyte Denizard Rivail to Allan Kardec. The success of spiritism depended upon the proper formation of mediums, and his "*Livre des Médiums*," printed in Paris in 1861, was to be the textbook of experimental spiritism. He is an authority on spiritism, and considered the absolute pope of spiritists. According to him, spiritism is a science which should be taught like physics or chemistry; all men have the germ of the necessary qualities to be an effective medium; his aim is to develop them.

CHAPTER III

SPIRITISTIC VOCABULARY

ALLAN KARDEC prefaces his book on mediums with a spiritistic vocabulary. For a thorough study of spiritism, its nature and tendencies, we should know what meaning spiritists attribute to the terms they employ in explaining its wonders. In examining the facts and in searching for the true cause of these facts, the vocabulary will be of valuable assistance, as it gives us the spiritistic theory in the words of its own standard-bearer. We limit ourselves to words which frequently recur in this treatise.

Angel.—According to the common idea, angels are intermediary beings between God and man. They were not created perfect, because perfection supposes infallibility, and because some of them rebelled against God. We speak of good and of bad angels. According to spiritistic teaching the angels are not distinct beings of a special nature;

they are the spirits of the first rank, that is, those who, after having undergone all the required trials, have become pure spirits.

Angel guardian.—A superior spirit charged with the protection of an individual on the way of progress. He follows him not only during life on earth, but in all his different incarnations after death. He is necessarily a good spirit.

Apparition.—A phenomenon by which the beings of the incorporeal world manifest themselves to our eyes. There are two kinds of apparitions: the first is impalpable and offers no resistance to touch; the other is palpable and presents the consistency of a solid body. Apparition differs from vision in this, that apparition is the object of our bodily eyes, and occurs in the place where we are, whereas vision has for object absent and far-away things seen by the soul, when emancipated, and when the sensitive faculties are more or less suspended.

Clairvoyance.—An inherent property of the soul, which enables some persons to see without the organ of sight.

Communication.—Intelligent manifestation of the spirits, having for its object an exchange of ideas between themselves and men. There are different kinds of manifestations: *vulgar* when unbecoming expressions are used, *frivolous* when

they refer to unimportant matters, *serious* when they exclude all frivolity, *instructive* when their object is a lesson on science, morals, philosophy, etc.

Death.—Destruction of the vital forces of the body through exhaustion of the organs. When the soul is deprived of the principle of organic life, it leaves and enters into the world of spirits. At the moment of death, the spirit always loses consciousness of itself; it therefore never witnesses the death of the body or the pangs of agony. This condition may last for a while, and only after all is over does the spirit recover consciousness. It is a change somewhat analogous to that of the chrysalids, with this difference, that the butterfly does not remember having been a caterpillar, whereas the spirit always remembers having been man.

Devil.—In modern languages the word applies to the evil spirits exclusively. According to a common belief, devils are beings necessarily wicked. The spirits teach us that God, infinitely just and good, could not have created beings always bent on evil, and unhappy for all eternity. According to them there are no devils in the restricted sense, but only imperfect spirits, often no better than those who are commonly called devils, who can improve themselves. The spirits of the lowest class would be real devils, if the word

did not imply the idea of a nature perpetually wicked.

Emancipation of the soul.—Peculiar state of human life, during which the soul, freeing herself in part of her bodily ties, enters more easily into communication with incorporeal beings.

Erraticity.—State of erratic spirits, that is, of non-incarnated spirits, during the intervals between reincarnations. The spirits of the first order only are not erratic, because they have no more incarnations to undergo. In that state the spirit recognises his former existences, as also the faults which keep him away from infinite happiness; he then selects new trials in order to advance the quicker.

Exorcism.—A formula of conjuring the devils to leave a person or a place. Experience shows that the spirits scoff at these means; the more importance is given them, the more infuriated they seem. There are more reasonable and more efficacious ways to ward them off; first wear out their patience, keep cool, and do not be afraid, and then pray for them.

Expiation.—Pains which the spirits suffer as a punishment for faults committed during their corporeal life. Expiation, as a moral suffering, takes place in the erratic state; as a physical suffering in the corporeal state.

Ecstasy.—Paroxysm of the emancipation of the soul during its corporeal life, which brings about the temporary suspension of the perceptive and sensitive faculties of the organs. In that state the soul is only united with the body by feeble ties, which it seeks to break; it belongs rather to the spiritual world than to the material. Ecstasy is sometimes natural and spontaneous; it may be produced also by magnetic action, and in this case it is a high degree of somnambulism.

Free will.—Faculty by which man guides himself in his acts. He enjoys the liberty to act or not to act in the spirit state, and in virtue of that faculty the spirit chooses the existence and the trials, which he considers to his advantage when they are not imposed. The spirits, who teach that doctrine, cannot be the evil spirits.

Hell.—According to the spiritistic doctrine, the sufferings beyond the grave can only be moral sufferings, and are inherent to the imperfect nature of the lower spirits. There is no localised hell in the sense commonly attached to that word. Wherever there are imperfect spirits there is hell. When Christ spoke about hell and corporeal punishment, He adapted His words to the ideas of His contemporaries; otherwise He would not have been understood. He left to the progress of science the care to rectify matters of form.

Intelligence.—Faculty of understanding and of reasoning. Animals have a kind of intelligence, and do not follow blindly the impulse of instinct. Observation proves that in many cases they act deliberately, yet their intelligence is always limited to material needs, whereas the intelligence of man enables him to rise above the condition of humanity. The difference between man and beast consists in the moral sense, the consciousness of good and evil, the progressive faculty, and the knowledge which he has of a supreme being.

Magic.—In the beginning it was the science of the learned. Those conversant with astrology, or who flattered themselves by foretelling the future, or performed extraordinary and incomprehensible tricks, were called magi or magicians. Abuse and quackery depreciated magic, but the phenomena which we now reproduce by magnetism, somnambulism, and spiritism prove that magic is not a dream. The reproduction of these phenomena has a tendency to destroy the prestige of those working in secret, and imposing upon the credulity of their patrons by attributing to themselves supernatural power. We know now that there is nothing supernatural in this world; certain effects appear to be against the laws of nature, simply because we do not know their causes.

Medium.—Persons accessible to the influence of

the spirits, and more or less gifted with the faculty to receive and to transmit their messages. For the spirits, the medium is an intermediary; it is an agent or an instrument whose aptitude is regulated by the nature and the degree of its mediumistic faculty. This faculty is a special organic disposition, which may be developed. There are various kinds of mediums.

Metempsychosis.—Transmigration of a soul from one body into another. The dogma of metempsychosis is based upon the individuality and immortality of the soul; we find it in the doctrine of the spirits about reincarnation. Between the metempsychosis of the Indians and the modern doctrine of reincarnation there is a wide difference. The first admits the transmigration of souls into the bodies of brutes, which is a degradation, and it admits also that this transmigration takes place upon earth. The spirits, on the contrary, tell us that reincarnation is a continual progress, and that these transmigrations may take place either on earth or in a world of a superior order.

Paradise or Heaven.—Sojourn of the blessed. The doctrine of the superior spirits on the subject is conformable to science. It shows us the sojourn of the blessed, no longer in an enclosed place, or in the spheres with which ignorance has encircled our globe, but wherever there are good spirits, in

space for those who are in an erratic state, in more perfect worlds for those who are incarnated. Science has investigated the ethereal depths; it shows up limitless space, strewn with an infinite number of globes, among which is ours. Scientists see infinite space and innumerable worlds where common belief had placed Heaven, and, in the bowels of the earth where it located hell, they discover the various geological strata. This discovery has led them to absolute doubt about both places; this doubt will be set aside by the teaching of the spirits.

Punishment (eternal).—The superior spirits teach that good only is eternal, because it is the essence of God, but that evil shall come to an end. As a sequel, they combat the doctrine of eternal punishment as contrary to God's justice and goodness. The imperfect spirits, because they do not see the end of their sufferings, think they will always suffer. When certain spirits speak of eternal punishment, it is an indication that they belong to the lower grades.

Perispirit.—Semi-material envelope of the spirit. The spirit takes it in the world, wherein he errs, and changes it for each reincarnation; it is either subtle or coarse, according to the nature of each globe. The spirit may give it any form he pleases, but generally it is the image of his last corporeal

existence. The perispirit, though being of an ethereal nature, may be so modified as to be visible. Man therefore is composed of a soul, a body, and a perispirit. When he dies the perispirit accompanies the spirit.

Plurality of worlds.—Doctrine which admits that the different globes of the universe are inhabited, and which is confirmed by all the spirits. In his description of life on Jupiter, Kardec gives the following pen-picture on information from the spirits: “All living beings are superior, both physically and morally; even the plants are more perfect and possess unknown properties. The bodies of animals are material as on earth, but approaching in outline the human form, and are thereby enabled to perform manual labour; their intelligence is more developed, they are the servants. Men have bodies of weak density, nearly fluid; they can freely move about through the air, and are not subject to our needs and infirmities. One of the results of a similar organisation is a sensibility which renders all their sensations far more subtle than ours; it enables them to receive impressions almost imperceptible to our senses. Death for them is but a simple transformation, and does not present the frightful sight of destruction and decomposition; it is not an object of fear and of regrets. Their occupations

are all intellectual; man conceives the ideas and animals execute them. Thought is communicated so easily as to render articulated speech useless; this is the way of communicating among animals. Conditions there are such that if a dweller on mother earth were bodily taken over thither, he would be but an animal. The soul is almost in a permanent state of emancipation; their normal state might be called that of our lucid somnambulists. There are among them various degrees of advancement, but no wicked passions, the fruits of egoism and pride, which are the source of so much trouble and misery in the inferior worlds. Goodwill, charity, justice, and true fraternity, these are supreme, and make of it a home of peace and happiness, and a step to supreme happiness."

Purgatory.—According to the Catholic Church, a place of temporary expiation for souls which must still be purified of their stains. The teaching of the spirits is far more explicit than that of the Church. They admit a temporary expiation, which is indeed what others call purgatory. This expiation is effected by the moral sufferings of the soul in the erratic state. The soul is purified in its corporeal existences, beginning with the first one upon earth; what it is unable to accomplish in one existence it will accomplish in a series.

Reincarnation.—Return of the spirit to cor-

poreal life. As a proof that it exists, Kardec in his vocabulary gives the following argument: "It either exists or it does not. If it does not exist, the fact should be proved not by a mere negation but by a clear demonstration of its impossibility. If it exists, it is because it is in the nature of things, and nothing can prevent its being." He even calls reincarnation a doctrine of Christ, and applies to it the words of Christ to Nicodemus about spiritual regeneration. (See St John, chap. iii.).

Satan.—The chief of demons. According to the teaching of the spirits, Satan is not a distinct being, because God can have no rival contesting his power. Satan is the allegorical personification of evil, and of all the evil spirits.

Soul.—To avoid all misunderstanding as to the meaning which he attaches to the word, Kardec calls *spiritistic soul*, or simply *soul*, an immaterial, distinct, and individual being, united with a body, which is its temporary envelope, that is, the spirit in the state of incarnation, which is the attribute of the human species only. *Vital principle*, the general principle of material life common to all organic beings—men, beasts, and plants. *Vital soul*, the vital principle individualised in anything. *Intellectual principle*, the general principle of intelligence common to men and beasts. *Intellectual soul*, that same principle individualised.

Spirit.—In the special sense of spiritistic teaching *spirits are the intelligent beings of creation, who people the universe outside of the corporeal world.* The spirits are not beings of a particular creation; they are nothing else but the souls of those who lived upon earth, or on the other worlds, and who have shed their corporeal envelope. All spirits have been men, in the same way as we after death shall be spirits. The nature of the spirits is unknown to us; they cannot define it, either owing to their inability or because our language is insufficient to express it. The spirits are not confined in any particular place; space is their domain, they are everywhere. The spirits being nothing else but the souls of men, even after their freedom from the body, they do not divest themselves of their inclinations, because as spirits they progress as men do. Hence follows that the world of spirits shows up all vices and virtues of humanity. We are on one step of the spirit ladder; there are some spirits infinitely above us, and others below the most backward of men.

Spirit world.—The aggregation of intelligent beings freed of their corporeal envelope. The spirit world is the normal, primitive, pre-existing and surviving world. The corporeal state is for the spirits but transitory. They change envelopes

as we change our dress; they throw off a worn one, as we cast off an old garment.

Spiritualism.—Belief in the existence of a spiritual, immaterial soul, which retains its individuality after death, not including, however, belief in the spirits; it is the opposite of *materialism*. Whoever believes that all in us is not matter is a *spiritualist*, but it does not necessarily follow that he admits the doctrine of the spirits. *All spiritists are necessarily spiritualists, but not vice versa; the materialist is neither the one nor the other.*

Trials.—Vicissitudes of corporeal life, by which the spirits purify themselves according as they bear up with them. In spiritistic teaching, the spirit freed of the body and recognising his imperfection, freely selects the kind of trials which he considers most suitable to his advancement, and which he will undergo in a new existence. If he should select trials above his forces, he fails, and his advancement is retarded. God may also impose trials, either as an expiation in certain cases, or because the spirit is too ignorant to make a judicious choice himself.

After his spiritistic vocabulary, of which the above are a few illustrations taken at random, Kardec proposes, after a denial of the wonderful and

supernatural, the method to follow in dealing with materialists and unbelievers, either through ignorance or malice. He devotes the second part of his book to spiritistic manifestations, and to the formation of mediums, more or less as a teacher assists his pupil in the solution of a mathematical problem. He speaks of the spirit world as if it had no secrets whatsoever for him, and ends by distorting quotations from great men such as St Augustine, St Vincent de Paul, Fénelon, and Massillon, and by gathering a few sentences from the Rule of St Benedict, interlaced with foreign matter, none of it bearing on the subject under consideration.

CHAPTER IV

MEDIUMS AND WAYS OF COMMUNICATING WITH THE SPIRITS

MEDIUMS are, according to Kardec's vocabulary, persons susceptible to the influence of the spirits, and more or less gifted with the faculty of receiving and transmitting their communications. For the spirits the medium is an intermediary, the medium is an agent or a tool more or less suitable. The faculty required resembles a special organic disposition, which may be developed. There are many varieties of mediums, according to their aptitude for this or that kind of transmission or communication. He divides them into thirty-two classes. It is not our purpose to treat of all these; we will only mention the principal ones in order to form a correct idea of mediums. Those who receive the communication of spirits by means of knocks or raps, are called *rappers*; those through whom the spirits upset, move, and displace tables, chairs, and other objects are called *movers*; those

through whom the spirits move objects such as chairs or persons to other places are called *carriers*; the last named are called *mechanics* if their work is done with fury and vehemence. Then come the *healers*, the *designers*, the *linguists*, etc. etc.

According to Kardec the whole of spiritism is based upon the principle that the spirits are nothing else but the souls of those who have lived either on this earth or in other worlds. These souls continue to people space, and form the invisible world surrounding us, and with which we are continually in contact. He then answers the question how spirits, being immaterial, can act materially, by asserting that they still retain the human form, under which they appear. In analysing the nature of man, he concludes to three essentials: soul, body, and *perispirit*. The last is a fluid, semi-material envelope of the soul, serving as a bond between it and the body. After death the perispirit is not consigned to the grave with the body, but accompanies the spirit on its roamings through space; this explains all their manifestations. With this explanation he dismisses the idea of the wonderful, of the supernatural. The question how a subtle, material substance like the perispirit can act upon heavy bodies, lift tables, etc., is answered by its unknown forces, somewhat

analogous to the mysteries of the electric current, setting in motion the heaviest machinery, splitting mountains and making firewood of trees.

One of the fundamental principles of spiritism consists in the admission that each medium is directed, assisted, and advised by a special spirit, who manifests its action and its qualities through the medium; this spirit is called in the spiritistic vocabulary *guide*. Another principle equally important consists in this : that to become a medium—the will to be one is not always necessary—one may become a medium without giving it a thought; others, once they are mediums, can never free themselves from the action of the spirits; others again, with the best will on earth, can never become mediums. It is also an undeniable fact that at spiritistic séances the communications of the mediums are far above their natural intelligence. Uneducated mediums are met who speak of philosophy and theology, write verses in unknown tongues, dictate treatises on physiology, anatomy, botany, and speak various languages without previous study. These facts have been observed even in the case of little children. Again mediums are found who discourse the sweetest music from Beethoven or Mozart without knowing one note from another.

That the spiritistic phenomena are really the

work of the spirits, the spiritists prove from the fact that in the manifestations proofs of intelligence are given which must exclude the purely physical act of any other agent. The difference in the manifestations is explained by the difference of higher and lower spirits, all intelligent, but the first say only reasonable things, whilst the others have the speciality of saying insignificant or stupid things. The history of spiritism conclusively proves that the ways of communicating with the spirits—as also their ways of manifesting themselves—have progressed from the turning table to the materialisation and the photographing of the spirits. The turning table was, in the words of Allan Kardec, the antechamber of spiritism, where all prejudices are laid aside.

The first intelligent manifestations were obtained by means of raps, or, as spiritists call it, by typtology. But this manner of manifestation offered limited resources, as the answers given were restricted to *yes* or *no*, according to the number of raps agreed upon; and there was the difficulty of formulating questions, to be answered either in the affirmative or in the negative. The violence of the raps was intended to carry greater conviction, and expressed sentiments of anger or impatience on the part of the spirit; the goodwill and politeness of the spirit

were indicated by a particular movement of the table. Typtology went on perfecting itself, and soon became a more complete way of communication, and was then called alphabetic typtology; each letter of the alphabet was represented by a given number of raps. This enabled the spirit to give any kind of an answer, but the procedure was too slow, and involved a great loss of time. Next came the table with all the letters of the alphabet and the different arithmetical figures written; the medium ran his fingers rapidly over the letters, a rap was heard when the letter was reached which was required in the formation of a word; numerous raps or a movement of the table indicated a mistake. These ways of communication were superseded by *pneumatography*, or the direct writing of the spirit without any intermediary, and by *psychography*, or the transmission of the ideas of a spirit, by means of a writing medium. The spirits able to produce noise and raps may of course manifest themselves by vocal sounds, imitating the human voice; this phenomenon is known in the spiritistic vocabulary under the name of *pneumatophony*.

CHAPTER V

A SPIRITISTIC SÉANCE AND ITS MOST IMPORTANT PHENOMENA

To form an idea of the phenomena which are the basis of spiritism, let us assist at a séance given by the one or other of the best mediums. Man or woman, the medium will have as a rule a pleasant face and attractive manners. Intelligent and highly cultured, by their correct and courteous ways they soon gain the confidence of those who approach them. In plain dress the medium receives the visitors as a rule at his house. The most perspicacious eye fails to detect any indications of scenic apparatus or other preparations. The floors are bare, the furniture is of the most common kind. If any doubts are entertained of hidden fraud, the medium is willing to show the visitor all over the house, and allows him to examine all nooks and corners. The operations take place generally in a dimly lighted room; but if objections to this are made the medium performs

in clear daylight, or with an artificial light of any kind. We do not describe any particular séance; we simply give the phenomena which are habitually produced in any successful spiritistic sitting.

The medium leaves the selection of a table to his visitors, and allows them to examine it on all sides at their leisure, and furthermore lets them place it in any part of the room. He next invites those present to stretch their hands on the table in a manner that the thumb of the right hand touches the thumb of the left, and the little finger touches the corresponding finger of the neighbour. The medium takes his place among the others, and completes with his hands the *chain* around the edge of the table. The chain appeared to be in the beginning a necessary condition, because it was supposed that in this way a sort of electric current was produced. According to Kardec experience has demonstrated the uselessness of it. The only condition strictly required is absolute silence, and patience when the manifestation does not occur immediately. Generally, after a few minutes of silent expectation the table clicks, moves, inclines from the one or other side, rises a little, and falls heavily on the floor.

The medium announces the presence of the spirits; the hands are taken off from the table, the chain is broken, the spirits present begin to

operate by themselves. If the chain is not broken the operations are in the hands of the spirits for as long as it shall please them; they are then considered as one body with the table.

We suppose that the chain is broken. Suddenly violent and oft-repeated raps are heard from various points of the table, placed at the disposition of the spirits. Then the table, untouched by any one of those present, stirs, rises, and turns on its legs, now slowly, then with vertiginous rapidity, first towards the right, then towards the left; it moves itself around in the room, and dances now on the one, then on the other of its legs. Finally, without the co-operation of anyone present, it returns to its place as if tired of the strenuous performance:

The most important spiritistic phenomena may be reduced to the following :

1.—Answers are given to questions either by means of raps agreed upon, or by a psychographic table, or by pneumatography. The hand of the writer is not seen. Sometimes whilst the medium writes his hand is guided by an unknown and invisible force, and often gives answers which absolutely exceed the intellectual culture of the medium itself.

2.—When the chain is broken, heavy objects,

untouched by anyone, freely move around in the room. If the chain is not broken, the operators move along with the table. Not only the table, but all the other objects in the room dance and fly around, and create a pandemonium to frighten the life out of the new-comer. After this infernal racket, the things return to their places as if nothing had happened.

3.—An alteration is noticed in the weight of objects; objects which could hardly be moved by several men of herculean strength are easily moved by children. Other objects, on the contrary, as light as a feather-pen, become so heavy that a number of strong men together can hardly raise them from the ground; these alterations, however, last only for a few minutes, according to the whims of the mysterious unknown.

4.—Like the objects, so also is the body of the medium raised, either on his chair or on the table, and seen rising as high as the ceiling; he remains suspended for a few minutes, and around his head or his whole body may be seen a luminous halo. He is then lowered by the mysterious force, either slowly or swiftly, and carried towards a closed window, which opens by itself. He then makes a few turns in the air, and re-enters the room by another window which opens before him, to the great wonder and astonishment of all

present. This feat may be repeated several times at the same séance.

5.—The above phenomenon is generally preceded by great changes in the dimensions of the medium, who, in the presence of all, and instantaneously, at one time appears like a pygmy, then again as a giant. This will last until those present have had ample time to take measurements.

6.—During a séance, almost invariably will appear, amid the darkness of the room, sparks, luminous circles, or lamps shedding a polychrome light, which move through the room, until the room is often lighted with an homogeneous light, of variable intensity, either continuously or intermittently.

7.—Apparitions of shining human members, such as hands, arms, feet, etc., and perfectly visible in daylight, are also of common occurrence, as also knocks from visible and tangible hands on the assembled visitors, knocks not always pleasing and gentle; one is slapped on the face, another has his hat thrown on the floor, a third gets his beard or his hair pulled, a fourth feels the impression of a kiss, causing sometimes a pleasing, then again a disgusting sensation. Not seldom in these conditions do some persons, probably more sympathetic with the spirits than others, see showered upon themselves foreign objects of unknown origin,

such as flowers, sweets, even books of devotion, etc.

8.—Manifestations of hidden things, or far-away events, indicated in any language, ancient or modern, by the mouth of the divining medium, who answers also any question. The medium will write these manifestations and answers swiftly and correctly, guided by an unknown hand. To avoid suspicion or fraud, this hand will write, unaided by the medium, with pencil or pen, which all see moving on the paper, though the hand moving the pencil or the pen does not appear. If the audience prefers, the manifestations and the answers will be written, without pencil or pen, on a folded piece of paper, even laid between two pieces of glass or marble, or sealed up in a box.

9.—Strange phenomena of writing. It happens sometimes that whilst a spiritist writes a letter to someone about matters concerning him, after a little while the hand of the writer stops, and obeys no longer the ideas which he intended to convey, but instead traces words entirely different from those he intended to write. The most wonderful of all is that a friend far away, who may happen to write a letter, is subjected to the same phenomenon; and when compared it is found that one letter completes the other. These and other similar strange phenomena are of frequent occurrence.

10.—A particular dead person is called up, and if the audience desires to hear his or her voice, immediately the unknown force begins to speak, answer, converse, imitating to perfection the tone of voice, the cadences, and the other vocal properties of the deceased. So may one hear the voice of a parent or of a child. Sometimes it happens that awful blasphemies are heard, when one of the assembly thinks of saying a prayer. The answers received at the séances frequently contain an incredible mixture of truth and falsehood, of good and evil. Often does the conversation with the spirits become incoherent and confused; the answers are no longer conformable to the questions, they are absurd, false, obscene, impious. This, according to spiritists, is due to the fact that lower spirits—deceivers, liars, and obscene—mix themselves with the spirits called up, or that the lower spirits assume the personality of the spirits evoked, or from other causes. The voices seem to come from the floor, the ceiling, the walls, or from the middle of the room.

11.—Apparitions and materialisations. In the séances at present the spirits frequently appear visibly, and allow themselves even to be touched and photographed. Sometimes they appear beautiful and well formed, then again the development of the form proceeds slowly in the presence

of the assembly; sometimes they assume a fixed posture, then again they move around freely in the room. A phenomenon of particular importance is the materialisation of the spirits, in which they present themselves as material, corporeal forms, exactly like persons living in the flesh, with circulation, respiration, heat, etc. In these conditions they allow themselves to be handled, touched, and attentively examined in all the details of scientific research, also to be weighed. They leave the impression of hands, feet, and even the face on various preparations for the purpose, and in such manner that the impression cannot possibly be made by the medium, who is generally in a cataleptic state, and closely watched.

The materialised spirit, as a rule, presents itself in large, flowing robes; often the head is encircled with a luminous halo, and occasionally even provided with wings. The countenance may be sweet, amiable, joyful, or it may be austere, wild, brutish. It moves about, and walks like other mortals. It sits down with the others, speaks, sings, writes, answers questions, shakes hands with those present, who receive the impression of a real, warm, living hand; it embraces them and allows itself to be embraced; permits them to tear off parts of its clothing or to pull off a lock of its hair, which immediately grows again. It will pose

for the camera and walk arm in arm with the medium. Materialisation is sometimes effected at once, then again slowly, in the sight of all; its disappearance also may be instantaneous or gradual.

These are the most important and certain phenomena at a spiritistic séance. They may happen in clear daylight or at night, although the unknown agents generally prefer darkness.

To vary the programme and make a séance still more interesting, it will be interspersed occasionally with music. If there is a musical instrument in the room, it will play without being touched by anyone. If the instrument is a piano or harmonium, the keys corresponding with the notes heard will be seen lowering, without the appearance of any hand touching them. If there is no instrument in the room, in the house, or even in the country, its absence does not prevent the rendering of music; invisible instruments will be heard at the pleasure of the medium. He furnishes any kind of music he pleases, from the gay two-step to the solemn Gregorian plain chant.

Before giving a few well-authenticated experiences illustrating the above general assertions, we must treat briefly of certain phenomena, very similar if not identical with spiritistic manifestations, and which of late years have been described

under the name of *telepathy*. Telepathy is the supposed fact that communication is possible between mind and mind otherwise than through the known channels of the senses, as from places widely separated without external means. One of the oldest classical examples on record is from an inscription discovered a few years ago, and reproducing a letter of the philosopher Epicurus (341-229 B.C.). His mother had had visions of absent persons, and received from them predictions of events, which subsequently really did happen. The son tried to pacify his mother, who had been deeply shocked by these occurrences.¹ The fact related by Cicero is well known.² Two friends had gone to Megara and went to different lodgings. In a dream the one sees the other calling him to his assistance against assassins; he disregards the dream and falls asleep again. The dream is repeated a second and a third time. Finally the friend appears with torn clothing and bleeding breast, and reproaches him for not having run to his assistance, notwithstanding his earnest request. The apparition concluded by saying: "At the break of a new day, my dead body shall be carried out of the city in a scavenger's wagon; verify what I tell you, have the assassins punished,

¹ Geffcken J. Preussische Jahrbuch, Dec., 1905.

² De Divinat, i. 27.

and render to me funeral honours." The friend finally believes the apparition, leaves his bed, and goes out to the gate of the city. There he finds the scavenger's wagon, gets the driver arrested, who becomes confused at the first questions, and inside the wagon he finds the corpse of his murdered fellow-traveller.

The famous Appollonius of Tiana (4 B.C.-A.D. 96) being in Alexandria, sees the Emperor Domitian in Rome fall pierced by a sword, and announces the fact to those with whom he was talking at the time. Subsequent advices from Rome corroborated the statement.

Theodore Agrippa d'Aubigné¹ relates the following fact. The Cardinal de Lorraine died at Avignon on 23rd December, 1574, whilst the King with his Court were in the city. Late one evening Queen Catherine of Medici had gone to bed, and was talking with some ladies and knights. When about to dismiss her visitors she threw her head suddenly on the pillow, covered her face with her hands, and calling for help she pointed out to her visitors the Cardinal, who at the foot of the bed was stretching out his hands to her. The apparition lasted only a few seconds. The King immediately dispatched one of his men to the home of the Cardinal; the messenger brought back the

¹ "Histoire universelle," Paris, 1616.

news that the Cardinal had expired a few minutes before.

The novelist, Alexander Dumas,¹ tells us how he learned the death of his father: "Towards eight o'clock in the evening my cousin Marianne had put me in my little bed, and I soon fell asleep, in that beautiful sleep which God gives to children, like dew to the spring. We were awakened at midnight by a heavy knock at the door. A lamp stood burning on the night table. In the dim light I saw my cousin rise in her bed, frightened to death, but without saying a word. Nobody could have knocked at that door, because two outside doors were shut. But I, who now tremble while penning these lines, was not in the least afraid, I jumped from my bed and went to the door. 'Alexander, where are you going?' shouted my cousin. 'I saw him,' I said quietly; 'I am going to open to papa, who is coming to bid us good-bye.' The poor girl sprang from her bed almost dead with fear, caught me while I extended my hands to the lock, and forced me back into bed. I struggled to be freed, and I shouted to the top of my voice, 'Good-bye, Papa; good-bye!' Something like a breath passed over my face and calmed me. I fell asleep again, my eyes filled with tears. In the morning they came to awaken me.

¹ Dumas, A.: "Mes mémoires," Paris, 1851.

My papa had died the very moment I had heard the heavy knock on the door. Then I heard the words, without, however, understanding them, 'My poor son, thy papa who loved thee so is dead.' Who pronounced the words which declared me an orphan at the age of three years and a half? It would be impossible for me to say. By whom was I told of the greatest misfortune of my life? I do not know."

More surprising still is the following fact, told by Gougenot de Mousseaux in his book on the "Great Phenomena of Magic," published in Paris in 1864.

While Robert Bruce, first mate on a steamer near the Newfoundland Banks, was one day standing in the cabin, he suddenly noticed a stranger seated at the captain's table. He left the cabin immediately to inform his superior officer, and on his return he found no one. But on the slate on which the captain made his calculations, an unknown hand had traced the following words: "Steer to nor-west." Led by curiosity, the captain obeyed the mysterious command. Three hours later the steamer met a disabled ship, crowded with passengers, and about to sink. The captain ordered the boats to be lowered, and sent them to rescue the shipwrecked. When the first boat returned alongside of the steamer, Bruce was

startled as he recognised in the first-comer the mysterious stranger. In the captain's presence he invited him to write on a slate the words, "Steer to the nor-west." The writing was exactly like that on the captain's slate. The writer could not give any explanation of the phenomenon. The captain of the wrecked vessel came to the rescue, and told how the passenger, worn out by fatigue, had fallen into a deep sleep, and that, rising after an hour or so, he had said, "Captain, we shall be saved this very day. I dreamed we were aboard another ship, which is coming to our assistance." He had also described the ship and the crew, and to their astonishment the description was absolutely correct. The passenger then added: "The strangest of it all is that all I see around me is very familiar to me, and yet I do not remember of having ever been on this ship."

We will be excused for relating these various cases of telepathy now, without examining the probable causes of the phenomena. We cannot of course guarantee the absolute objective truth of these alleged occurrences, but after considering the evidence we have no reason to suspect their veracity, or call them into question. They will show what has happened, and what may happen, without causing us any special surprise.

CHAPTER VI

A FEW WELL-AUTHENTICATED EXPERIENCES

ON reading a cursory description of spiritistic wonders, one might imagine that he had before him a fascinating romance, or at least an ingeniously plotted novel.

But that the curious occurrences which we will briefly relate, and which have been told by others who made them the object of special study, are sturdy realities is attested by an almost unlimited number of witnesses.

Statistics presented at the second spiritistic congress, held in Paris in 1889, in the rooms of the Grand Orient of French Freemasonry, Cadet Street, No. 16, show that the five hundred delegates represented forty thousand individual members belonging to the various spiritistic societies. We may then with certainty conclude that there are at least six million people who can bear witness to the various spiritistic phenomena. The congressmen have probably exaggerated when placing

the figure at from twelve to twenty millions. It would be useless, however, to deny such a formidable array of witnesses, and we may add that perhaps none of them were converted to spiritism until they had been witnesses of its doings.

Among the witnesses we find representatives of almost all nations—Americans, English, French, Danes, Dutch, Scandinavians, Germans, Russians, Spaniards, Portuguese, Italians, even Egyptians and Indians. In as far as their creeds are concerned we find among them Mormons, Atheists, Materialists, Rationalists, Orthodox, Schismatics, Protestants, and even Catholics.

That a nation, or many people of a nation, or of a religion in our age of doubt and scepticism, agree in presenting as true facts what is merely an illusion, is, to say the least, improbable. But that multitudes of all nations under the sun, of different religious affiliations and tendencies, of various, even sometimes conflicting characters and interests, all agree in presenting as true—not only in substance but also in the minute details—events which are merely inventions, is so strange as to seem absurd.

It is a remarkable fact that the most confirmed sceptics of spiritism become as a rule its most ardent abettors, after they have assisted at well-conducted séances with good results. Victor

Hugo, to quote a great name, used to call spiritistic experiments superstition, fraud, and buffoonery. At length he yielded to the entreaties of Mme de Girardin, and of other friends, and assisted at a séance, with the result that he changed his opinion.

The great English astronomer, Herschell, at first called spiritism quackery. A friend of his invited him to a séance to be held in clear daylight. The medium was to be a country woman without education; wonders were told of her. The astronomer, to unmask her, questioned her, after she had fallen into a trance, upon certain equations of time, and of the movement of a planet. The medium answered that the figures of Herschell were faulty, and added the correction to be made. Herschell laughed as an unbeliever, but a few years later, when going over his figures, he found that the medium was right.

Spiritism, unlike numbers of secret societies, makes no efforts at keeping its secrets; its votaries appear as willing witnesses on the lecturer's stand or in the newspapers. They pride themselves on their spiritistic convictions, because they have seen for themselves the things in which they believe; they cheerfully leave their address and invite all to verify their statements for themselves.

It may be that among the witnesses on record there are individuals carried away, and silly, half-

crazy or incompetent persons. We are willing to grant, for argument's sake, that this is the case with the great majority. But we cannot deny that many of the witnesses are above reproach or suspicion. In fact many of them occupy eminent positions in the world of journalism, letters, astronomy, physics, etc.; there are among them doctors, philosophers, theologians, diplomats, sociologists, etc. Such names as the following are found on the list: Walter Scott, Victor Hugo, Napoleon III., Swedenborg, A. Y. Tyndal, Humboldt, President Abraham Lincoln, W. E. Gladstone, etc. etc.

After these preliminary remarks, we will give a few well-authenticated experiences, and begin with those of William Crookes.

Crookes is one of the first scientists of modern times among those who, by their doctrine and experiments, have advanced the study of physics and chemistry. He is very widely known in the scientific world. He has given us a clever monograph on polarised light, important essays on the spectroscopy of the sun and of the terrestrial bodies, on the phenomena of polarisation and the spectral microscope. He has discovered a method of amalgamation on the basis of sodium, much used in the metallurgic industries; he also discovered thallium, the radiant matter and the tubes, known by the name of the discoverer, which eventually

led Röntgen of Würzburg to the discovery of his famous X-rays in 1895. We are indebted to Crookes for many researches concerning the photography of heavenly bodies, especially of the moon, and in the field of hygiene. The above sketch of his works will convince us that Crookes is not a new-comer, but a man of very great attainments, and deserving special confidence in his scientific experiments. Moreover, up to 1871 Crookes showed himself always a pronounced opponent to spiritistic facts, declaring them to be contradictory to the laws of nature. His opposition, however, grew weaker when he realised that he could not deny what accurate and qualified observers, with great patience and trouble, had ascertained. He next began a series of experiments himself for the sole purpose of verifying whether the facts related by others were true. He took all possible precautions to eliminate every shadow of fraud on the part of the medium, and to bring out the facts such as they were. First of all he selected excellent mediums, such as Daniel Douglas Home and Miss Cook, famous all over the world in calling forth the materialisation of spirits.

Crookes had the assistance of two English scientists, W. Huggins and E. W. Cox. Before the experiments the temperature of the room was taken, the medium was carefully watched and

assisted in making his toilette; then two observers placed themselves alongside of Home, and put their feet upon his. In the room there was an harmonium, which they enclosed in a metallic cage. The experiment took place in clear daylight. Home put his hand into the cage; the harmonium was seen to oscillate at first, sounds were heard, and it played a simple tune. Crookes concluded that the result could not have been obtained except by working the various keys of the instrument; all those present regarded the experiment as conclusive. The next number, however, was still more extraordinary. Home raised his hand from the instrument, withdrew it from the cage, and placed his hand into that of a bystander; the instrument continued to play, and yet there was no hand near it.

Crookes was a witness to all the phenomena which we have described in chapter four. He concluded that they clearly indicated the action of an outside intelligence. To convince himself of it he invited the foreign agent to give him a telegraphic message by means of raps on his hand, according to the Morse alphabet. The feat was correctly accomplished. On another occasion, having his back turned to the table, and holding his finger on a copy of *The Times*, he said to the invisible cause: "Write the word under my finger

if you can see it." Crookes himself did not know what it was, but the pencil wrote *however*, which was found to be the actual word.

But the most interesting and most wonderful of his experiments were with the materialised spirit. For these experiments Miss Florence Cook acted as medium; she had an international reputation for producing materialisations. Crookes took for this séance all the precautions which art and science might suggest to a conscientious and experienced observer, like himself, in order not to be the subject of any illusions, and to remove all suspicion of fraud on the part of the medium; he was all the more careful as he still was rather incredulous and distrustful of the facts of spiritism.

In the presence of many friends and famous scientists, he began and continued his séances, and by the means of his medium he could enjoy for three years the presence of a materialised spirit. On it, like on a true and living person, he could make all the physiological observations which he deemed proper to convince himself of the fact that the materialised spirit was not his medium, Miss Cook. The spectre then did not always present itself in human form, but sometimes in the form of a sky-coloured nebula, near the medium, from which slowly the materialisation developed. From this nebula the human form little by little took shape.

The outlines became visible, then came motion, quickening, a well-coloured face, bright and glittering eyes, the heart beat; finally the beautiful human form of a woman appeared, who moved about, spoke to each of the assembled guests, conversed with the members of Crookes' family. Then all of a sudden the figure would disappear, nobody knew how or whither; sometimes also it disappeared by degrees, as it had been formed. The womanly figure gave her name as Katie King, and said she was the spirit of a young deceased Indian woman. She was affable, sweet, and attractive, and wore a long white dress, and had a turban on her head. During this long apparition Crookes was enabled to take several photographs of her, and ascertain that she was a being of flesh and bones, and perfectly distinct from the medium. To make doubly sure that the apparition was distinct from the medium, the electrician, Cromwell Varley, conceived the idea of having a weak electric current pass through the body of the medium during Katie's apparitions. He used a galvanic battery with his apparatus. A movement on the part of Miss Cook to play the part of the medium would have been noticed; she could not put on a white dress such as Katie wore and leave her place without disconnecting the current. Once in the home of Mr Luxmoor, in the West End of London, whilst Miss Cook was in a trance, the

current was uninterrupted for one full hour; all this time Katie was plainly visible in the room. Crookes continued his experiments in various other ways; the result evidently proving that Katie was a separate being. When Katie finally disappeared, not to return again, Crookes was absolutely convinced that the spiritistic facts are no illusion or hallucination.

In answer to the question whether he believed the facts to be supernatural or not, he said: "We are chemists, not physicists; it is not our business to believe or disbelieve, but to ascertain whether a given phenomenon is imaginary or otherwise; the rest does not concern us. In regard to the reality of the phenomena, we affirm, to the great astonishment of our senses and our intellect, that the evidence compels us to admit them.

Critics have tried to discredit Crookes' story; it was even reported that he had retracted it. In 1898, as President of the British Association, he delivered a lecture, in the course of which, after having reviewed the more remarkable scientific questions, he frankly reasserted his views concerning spiritism, and concluded by saying: "I have nothing to retract; I maintain all my affirmations as they are published."

Upon the successful experiments of Crookes,

proving the truth of the spiritistic phenomena, many more followed in various places.

Those of Dr C. Lombroso, a Jewish materialist, are all the more interesting as he was a strong disbeliever in spiritistic facts, although, unlike Crookes, he never succeeded in obtaining any materialisations. To prove the logic of his strong opposition to these phenomena, and at the same time to test the authority of so many scientists, who through the experiments had become ardent believers in spiritism, he commenced a series of experiments himself. He associated with himself famous specialists on nervous diseases. His medium was Eusapia Paladino, an uneducated fruit pedlar of Naples. The woman, at the age of thirteen, was recognised to be a medium, although she was not aware of it, and did not know anything about spiritism. Lombroso tells us what he and his colleagues had seen with their own eyes. They had taken all possible precautions; the experiments began and ended in the light, and to prevent all possible fraud one of the company would light a match every once in a while. Very singular facts were ascertained. He clearly saw the raising of the table and of the chair; from his efforts to lower them he figured the resistance at 10 or 12 lb. Raps were heard in answer to questions concerning the ages of those present, a bell was

heard ringing over their heads, and with the light of a match one of them could see it swinging in the air. One felt his beard pulled, another the chair taken from under him. A heavy curtain dividing an alcove from the room, three or four feet away from the medium, began to swing as if moved by the wind, when all at once it moved in the direction of Lombroso, and was wrapped around him; he had great difficulty in freeing himself. Others saw yellow sparks over his head.

Lombroso tells of Canker Hirsch assisting at a séance, and asking to speak with a person dear to him. The person wanted was a French lady, who had died about twenty years before. He saw her figure and heard her speak in French. Lombroso was convinced of the facts, which he considered inexplicable with the theories of neuropathology. Professor Lombroso continued his experiments with the use of a dynamometer, and convinced himself that at spiritistic séances objects are made light or heavy by an unseen and unknown power.

Paul Gibier, a noted French physician, who has left us several publications, concerning especially hydrophobia and phthisis, tells us of a spiritistic séance at the house of a renowned professor, M. B. This séance was held without the co-operation of a medium. He relates it in the following words:¹

¹ "Le Spiritisme," Paris, 1896.

“ One winter’s evening we met at the home of M. B., and resolved to give our scepticism regarding spirits a last trial. We used the onigi board. Professor M. B. and his wife put their hands on the dining-room table, and invited us to join them, which we did. Suddenly the table began to move, and with raps corresponding with the letters of the alphabet, told us a joke of very questionable character, which caused the young woman to blush. M. B. told us: ‘ I know who he is; he is one of the lower spirits, rather bad than good, of whom we will not get rid.’ But the communication at once changed, and gave us a beautiful phrase. The style was so different that we laughingly said: ‘ This is not the same spirit.’ The table, however, protested: ‘ It is the same.’ Then we said, ‘ You are not the author of that phrase.’ The answer was in the negative. We asked for the title of the book from which he had taken it. He gave it. The book was in the library of M. B. We glanced at it, and soon found the quartette given us by the table:

‘ Je suis au paradis ainsi qu’un déclassé
 Je suis mêlé, démon, à la foule des anges
 Je souille leurs blancheurs au contact de mes fanges
 Près des amphores d’or je suis un pot cassé!
(Satan).

“ ‘ Ho, ho! Mr Satan,’ we said quickly, ‘ we

B

suspected that you had stolen these verses from somebody.' Satan proved himself equal to the occasion, and told us that he was the Satan of whom Victor Hugo spoke (*La fin de Satan*), and that he would soon take up his abode in the home of the elect. After that he bade us good evening in a diabolical manner, by causing the table to make a gracious reverence to each of us."

Gibier also made numerous experiments with the aid of the American medium, Slade, and obtained most of the results which we have specified in chapter four.

Strange results are related by Professor Aksakof, who, with the aid of a Mrs E. d'Esperance, obtained numerous materialisations. The strangest of it all was that when a spirit materialised his lady medium disappeared completely. On one occasion even she lost a leg, which she could not take back again.

We will add but one more illustration of spiritistic wonders. It is the case of the Pausini brothers. The correctness of the facts are vouched for by Bishop Berardi of Ruvo, Archbishop Vaccaro of Bari, the local physician of Ruvo, a Waldensian preacher, and the reporters of several newspapers. The case goes to prove that one can be a medium without knowing it, and

without any free concurrence of the will. The papers began writing about it towards the end of 1905.

Unusual occurrences began to take place in the home of these children in 1901. One evening little Alfred, about seven years of age, fell into a deep stupor. In this state he spoke in an unusual tone of voice, as a great orator, in Greek, Latin, and French, and recited correctly a few songs from the *Divina Commedia*. On another occasion, in the same kind of stupor, he said that he would quickly prepare a good supper for the family. In reality, in a few minutes on a well-prepared table could be seen eatables, and in his bed were found preserves. Bishop Berardi of Ruvo, where these things happened, advised the parents to send little Alfred to the seminary. He was calm and peaceful for the two years he remained there; but a strange phenomenon took place even there. It was noticed that when anyone stared at him, and mentally formulated a question, he unconsciously wrote the reply. One day he was invited to a spiritistic séance in company with three of his professors. He accepted reluctantly. A heavy paper triangle was used with the letters of the alphabet on the table, the séance began, and the following dialogue ensued :

“ Will you answer us? ”

“ Yes, but the triangle must be of wood.”

“ We have none of that kind.”

“ I have made one and you will find it in the kitchen behind a pot.” In fact the wooden triangle was found behind a saucepan; it was cut with great precision, at each end was a nail neatly cut in the middle.

“ Where did you make it? ”

“ At Bari,” and he gave the name of the street and the number. It was the workshop of a carpenter.

When ten years old Alfred left the seminary to return to his parents. Then began still more remarkable phenomena, in which also figured his brother Paul, eight years old. One day both brothers were at Ruvo at 9 a.m.; at 9.50 they stood before the Capuchin convent at Molfetta, without knowing how they got there, or for what purpose. Another day Paul was sent to get some wine for dinner; a half-hour later Alfred suddenly disappeared, and at 1 p.m. both boys were at sea in a boat near Barletta, in the direction of Trinitapoli. The boys then began so to weep that the boatman, who said he had been paid by an unknown stranger, felt compelled to make for the shore. A hackdriver, whom they knew, brought them back home to Ruvo. Several times afterwards did they similarly disappear, and were

invariably taken home either by friends or by the police. The mother, not knowing what to do, went again to Bishop Berardi with the two boys and a little girl, and begged of him to take Alfred back into the seminary; but while they were talking with the Bishop the boys again disappeared. The questions which obviously present themselves are: How could the boys cover eight or nine miles in half an hour by running? How is it that on the way they were not seen by anyone, although the road was much frequented? How could they be so suddenly in a boat at sea? How explain that they spoke so many different languages, although they had never been to school?

We will not attempt to reply now; we will first give the facts, and show what phenomena are describable to spiritism. In the following chapters we will examine the nature of these facts in the light of medicine and sound philosophy.

CHAPTER VII

SPIRITISTIC DIALOGUES

It is to be regretted that writers on spiritism have not laid more stress on the answers obtained from the spirits at the séances, as these dialogues clearly indicate the nature of the cause leading up to spiritism. The dialogues which we give here are from authentic sources. We see in them the doctrine which spiritism is called upon to instil into the minds of its patrons. These dialogues will enable us to judge the tree by its fruit.

Professor Aksakof relates in his book, “*Ani-misme et Spiritisme*,” how he experimented to find out whether the spirits could see or not. The following dialogue was the result :

QUESTION.—Do you see us? ANSWER.—Yes.

Q.—Do you see also the letters of the alphabet?

A.—Yes.

Q.—Through your eyes or through ours? A.—Through both.

Q.—If the medium closes his eyes, do you continue to see? A.—Yes; that matters little.

Q.—Have you a special organ of sight? A.—
We have.

Q.—Is it corporeal? A.—Certainly.

The Catholic writer, M. C. de Larouche-Héron, in the early days of the talking tables, accompanied a friend to Mrs Brown, the oldest of the Fox girls, who, on the advice of the spirits, had obtained a divorce from her first husband, Fisch, in order to marry Brown. He reports the following dialogue:¹

Q.—Are you sent by God? A.—Yes.

Q.—Are you not rather sent by the devil?
A.—No.

Q.—Will the spirit tell me which is the best religion? (*No answer.*)

Q.—Is it perhaps the Methodist, the Papist, the Catholic, the Presbyterian, the Jewish, the Mohammedan? (*Absolute silence.*)

Q.—All religions are absurd? A. (*three strong raps*).—Yes.

Q.—We must follow the dictates of our own conscience? A.—Yes.

Q.—It is necessary to listen to the spirits? A.—Yes.

¹ L. Figuier, "Histoire du merveilleux," vol. iv., page 292. Paris, 1881.

Q.—Every religion then in which there are priests is bad? A.—Yes.

Q.—The religion with a Pope is bad? A.—Yes.

Q.—The religion with any kind of minister is bad? A.—Yes, yes, yes.

Mirville, who treats professionally of the spirit world, relates many instructive dialogues, which clearly show the cause of the spiritistic phenomena, and should put on their guard all those who think that they can harmlessly play with the spirits by means of the talking tables. He tells us how Viscount de Meslon, after hearing of the feats of spiritism in the United States and in Germany, was anxious to try, in the beginning of May, 1853, some experiments, in company with two young men and a lady twenty-three years of age. Here are some of the questions and answers :

Q.—Do we really deal with intelligent beings? A.—Yes.

Q.—Are these things of an order superior to ours? A.—Yes.

Q.—This order is the nearest to us? A.—Yes.

Q.—Are there any other higher orders? A.—Yes.

Q.—What is your nature? Is it perhaps material like ours? A.—No.

Q.—Is it a fluid or gaseous nature? A.—Yes.

Q.—Are you intelligent and good beings?

A.—Yes.

Q.—You would not wish then to harm or help us to do evil to others? A. (*with force*).—No.

Q.—Is there after death a punishment for the wicked? A.—Yes.

Q.—There is then an eternal hell? A.—No.

Q.—The Catholic Church does deceive us then on this point? A.—Yes.

Q.—In what consists the punishment of the wicked? A.—To pass a certain time of trial in the sphere nearest to the earth; then to rise successively and progressively from sphere to sphere, in proportion as they are purified, until they reach the last sphere, in which they are reunited with God.

Q.—Are you of the same nature as the rapping spirits of the United States? A.—Yes.

Q.—Are there any other means, besides the magnetic chains, to put us in communication with you? A.—No.

Q.—Are there not perhaps what men call mediums, who can communicate directly and immediately with you? A.—Yes.

Q.—Then under certain conditions you can manifest yourselves *visibly* to us? A.—Yes.

Q.—Have you formerly lived on earth? A.—Yes.

Q.—Do you remember your past life among us?

A.—Yes.

Q.—You take an interest then in those who love you in this world? A.—Yes.

Q.—Do you love any of us? A.—Yes.

Q.—Tell us whom? A.—The lady.

Q.—Since how long have you left the earth?

A.—Nine years.

Q.—How old were you when you died? A.—Thirty-nine years.

Q.—What are you, man or woman? A.—Woman.

At this stage the conversation was interrupted, because the lady was overcome with emotion at the thought that it was perhaps the spirit of her mother. The acquaintances of the Viscount soon heard of the occurrence; the members of his family wished to enter into communication with the spirit by means of a one-legged table. After the table had turned around a few times the spirit manifested his presence. The raps began, the spirit guessed the time marked by the clock, said he took a great interest in the family, and was, in fact, the spirit of the Viscount's brother who died in 1845, in the noble sentiments of Christian resignation. Experiments went on to find out whether he was what he pretended to be. They conjured the

spirit in the name of the living God not to deceive them; blessed medals, rosaries, crucifixes, etc., were placed on the table. The spirit showed himself very docile and religious; he claimed to be sent by God to protect the whole family, and to teach them what was right; advised them to love God, to pray to the Blessed Virgin, towards whom the deceased brother had nourished a tender devotion. He quoted freely from the gospels and the sacred books; regretted that the Viscount's father let business interfere with his religious duties. Notwithstanding this holy talk, the father of deceased and the learned pastor of Renzan tried to see clear, distrusted the unseen speaker, and thought that probably they were listening to the spirit of lies instead of the deceased brother. There was a good attendance at the séance. The spirit would not reply to questions of personal interest, or concerning the future, and rebuked them for their frivolity and imprudence.

One evening, however, a cousin of the Viscount began to play with another table, and received from it the message that the spirit speaking through the first table should be distrusted, as he sought to deceive them. Then followed a verbal war between the two, until the spirit of the second table declared that he was inspired by the devil, and that the good done them by the spirit of the

brother had excited his jealousy, and that God had ordered him to leave. On the following days the first table continued to give them such fine talks that they really believed him to be the spirit of the brother. The family acted in all sincerity and good faith, and for that reason God did not allow them to be deceived any longer. One Sunday the Viscount's mother and aunt again questioned the first table, but it ceased to be docile, and refused to answer. The ladies insisted that he should answer. The table rose brusquely, and the following words were heard: "I am tired of always repeating to you sweet words, in which I do not believe, and to express sentiments of affection when I have for you nothing but hatred."

Q.—But then you are not what you pretended to be? said the horrified ladies. A.—No.

Q.—Who are you then? A.—The spirit of evil.

Q.—Why have you played so long this unworthy comedy with us? A.—To try to inspire confidence, in order to deceive you better afterwards.

Q.—Did you not suffer when you were obliged to speak to us of God, of the Blessed Virgin, of the saints, and especially when blessed medals, rosaries, crucifixes, were placed on the table? A.—I suffered, but I dissimulated my sufferings in order to succeed in ruining you later.

Q.—You hate us then? A.—Yes, because you are Christians.

At the conclusion the spirit took leave, and told them: “God forced me to speak in those terms, hell claims me. Good-bye.”

The Baron of N., an unbeliever, who had lost all faith in the supernatural, allowed Des Mousseaux and De Mirville¹ to give to the public his experiences with the turning and talking tables. He was anxious to experiment, although he felt that, if he were compelled to believe in the supernatural, his conversion would be the result. He addressed the table in the following words:

Q.—Do you know that you are working against your interest? Do you know that you will lead me to go to confession right away? (*The Baron was a Catholic*). A.—No, no.

Q.—Yes, yes. A.—No.

Q.—Yes. A.—I will prevent you.

Q.—How can you prevent me? A.—You will find out.

“The fact is,” he added, “that I went right away to confession, for which I had such great aversion. From that moment the vengeance of the spirits was atrocious; I became their slave, they

¹ J. E. de Mirville: “*Question des Esprits*,” page 88 et seq. Paris, 1885.

mastered me completely. I could not think any longer of myself, nor speak by myself. I suffered all the tortures of hell, and I do not know what would have become of me but for the prudent advice of the director whom I had chosen. Thanks to him, and to redoubled prayer and confidence, my evil guests at last disappeared. The last of them, when leaving, told me: 'Good-bye! thou hast won, but we will find thee again in thy bed at the hour of death, when we are omnipotent.' Since then I am the happiest of men. Yet I tried some time later to get into touch with them again for the purpose of doing perhaps a little good."

Q.—Give us (*I told them*) some idea of God's goodness? A.—How can you have it, as it is infinite?

Q.—It is infinite, and yet you, wretch that you are, suffer? A.—Terribly.

Q.—And always? A.—Always.

Q.—But while you are so unhappy as you say, and whereas God is good, why do you not try to appease Him, Who knows? A.—You ask something which is absolutely impossible.

Q.—If God offered you to be completely annihilated, would you accept? *After a little hesitation one of the spirits replied.*—Yes, because being is the only good which I still have

from Him; once annihilated I would not be indebted to Him for anything. *The other spirit answered.*—No, I would not accept, because I would have no longer the pleasure of hating Him.

Q.—You then hate Him intensely? A.—Hate Him! My name is hatred, I hate everything; I hate myself!

In 1854 Des Mousseaux, an engineer, four priests—authorised presumably by their bishop to ascertain the new facts—and a few other persons assisted at several spiritistic séances. Des Mousseaux acted as secretary, and wrote down during the sittings the following dialogue :¹

Q.—Are you a spirit? A.—Yes.

Q.—An evil spirit? A.—Yes.

Q.—What is your name? (*The table did not move.*)

[*In a preceding séance the spirit had called himself devil.*]

Q.—Are you a demon? A.—Yes.

Q.—Of what order? (*The table did not move.*)

Q.—Where were you a little while ago, when the spirit said he dwelt in the air? A.—In hell.

¹ P. Franco: "Lo Spiritismo," page 304, Roma, 1893. Also Des Mousseaux: "Mœurs et pratiques des démons," page 245 *et seq.* Paris, 1865.

Q.—You mean to say the lower places? A.—Yes.

Q.—In hell? A.—Yes.

Q.—Do you suffer? *Two powerful raps answer.*
—Yes.

Q.—You never lived on earth? Have you always been a spirit? A.—Always spirit.

Q.—You lied when you called yourself Rabbi? (*An allusion to a preceding séance.*) A.—Yes.

Q.—Does it cost you much to own up to your lies? A.—Yes.

Q.—It is perhaps the priestly power which forces you to reply? A.—Yes.

Q.—The fight which now begins (*spiritism*), is it the fight of the Anti-Christ? A.—Yes.

[*Nobody is of course obliged to believe this.*]

Q.—Is there an eternal hell, as Catholics pretend? *A loud knock answers.*—No.

Q.—Is Christ the Son of God? *Another powerful rap answers.*—No.

Q.—Christ is then a man like me? (*The table does not move.*)

In a following séance, still more important, the above gentlemen force the spirit to take back these last blasphemous utterances.

The table, questioned again, rose. They asked it:

Q.—Is there a spirit present in the table?

A.—Yes.

Q.—What is your name? (*The table does not move.*)

Q.—Are you present here on the strength of an evocation? A.—Yes.

Q.—Whence do you come? A.—From hell.

Q.—Are you suffering? *The table with force, yet slowly, raps.*—Yes.

Q.—Do you love Christ? A.—No.

Q.—And the Blessed Virgin? A.—No.

Q.—Do you come here to do us good or to do us evil? A.—Evil.

Q.—Lucifer is your chief? A.—Yes.

Q.—Must you obey Christ's commands? A.—Yes.

Q.—Are you eternal? A.—Yes.

[*The spirit had misunderstood the questioner, he took him to mean immortal.*]

Q.—After how many centuries will you cease to exist? Give one rap for each century.

[*The table begins and continues to rap till they stop it at the thirty-fifth rap.*]

Q.—You lie? A.—Yes.

Q.—Is Christ the Son of God? A.—No.

Q.—I command you to tell us whether you really know Him? A.—Yes.

Q.—The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are three? A.—One.

Q.—One of the Three Persons has become man? A.—Yes.

Q.—Who? A.—The Son.

Q.—Do you realise His real presence in the Eucharist? A.—Yes.

Q.—Do you realise the eternity of the pains of hell? A.—Yes.

Q.—You again lied to us then? A.—Yes.

[The table here almost upset in confirmation of this sad confession.]

The Bishop of Rennes, in France, in order to be enlightened on the subject, in the early days of modern spiritism, decided to make some experiments with the table. He invited his vicars-general and his canons to a table performance at the episcopal palace. The table was questioned in regard to a young missionary, who had died a martyr's death in China a short while before. The Bishop had on him a little piece of the martyr's shirt, soaked with his blood. The table, by means of conventional raps, told so minutely and so truly the story of the martyr's cruel sufferings, that the Bishop and his invited guests were amazed. The Bishop interrupted the séance by saying aloud: "You could not know all these things if you were

not the devil. Now, if really you are the devil, I conjure you in the name of Almighty God, of Jesus Christ crucified, I oblige and I command you to break down at my feet." The table at once made a jump, and, falling aslant, broke two of its legs before the feet of the Bishop.¹

Allan Kardec, the standard-bearer of modern spiritism, in his book on mediums (chapter twenty-five) answers in his way a number of questions concerning the information that may be secured from the spirits, and the questions that may be put to them. According to him, any question may be asked; if it is beneath the dignity of a superior spirit to answer, an inferior spirit will always be on hand to satisfy the curiosity of the inquirer, although he claims that these are not conspicuous for truthfulness.

¹ P. S. Pailloux: "Le Magnetisme, le Spiritisme et la Possession," page 435. Paris, 1886.

CHAPTER VIII

THE FAKIRS OF INDIA

To show that the wonderful feats of spiritism described in the preceding pages are not the exclusive privilege of the educated white race, we must speak of the achievements of the fakirs of India. The contrast will prove that the whites are just beginners, and are outdone by their dusky brothers.

Indian fakirs are the lowest class of the sacerdotal caste. The word itself, of Arabic origin, simply means a poor man—a beggar. As a religious class they are found all over India, and are conspicuous for their strange manner of living; they outdo the spiritists in producing the most wonderful phenomena, which science so far has failed to reconcile with natural causes, and which bear the closest resemblance to the performances of spiritism. The fakirs are divided into various classes, constituting so many castes. Some of them are educated, and able to teach the

sacred books of the Hindoos; others go about begging, either singly or in groups. This nomadic life of sacrifice, their self-denial, their dependence upon the generosity of others, their absolute poverty, have surrounded them in the eyes of the people with a halo of holiness. The Hindoos, when passing them, bend the knee as a token of homage, often even they kiss their feet, or their worn-out and torn clothing; they beg of them formulas and particular prayers to prevent disease. We have time and again been witnesses of the esteem in which they are held. In their confidence they take the place of the doctor, the lawyer, the prophet, and the priest. These are the ordinary fakirs.

Besides these there is another class called the Sivaites, or followers of the third god of the Hindoo triad, representing the principle of destruction or reproduction. These mortify their body and practise the most severe penances, wear a neglected beard, and never let a comb touch their hair. They wander from place to place in quest of alms. Some of them never speak; others, through mortification, live on the poorest stuffs. There are fakirs who bury themselves to the waist and even to the neck, and keep the head exposed to the rays of the sun; others continually sit on chairs with pointed nails, others again keep their fingers pressed

against the palm of their hands till the growing nails penetrate into the putrified flesh, etc. etc.

This alone is sufficient to explain in what veneration they must be held by a semi-barbarous and superstitious people, who furthermore are witnesses of their wonderful feats.

The facts we narrate are confirmed by numberless witnesses. Missionaries and colonial officials of various European countries bear testimony to them. The achievements of the Hindoo fakir are just as well known as those of the American or European spiritists.

L. Jacolliot, a judge in French India, gives us in his book "*Le Spiritisme dans le Monde*"¹ numerous instances of the wonders worked by the fakirs. He assures us that their methods cannot be compared with the tricks of a sleight-of-hand man. The reasons he gives are that they never perform before an invited meeting, where control would be difficult, if not impossible; they retire to the places of their experiments, invariably alone. They have nothing else but a whistle and a magic switch with seven knots, which they never lay aside. If during their performances they are in need of anything or of anybody, they turn to their host. They are satisfied with any offering whatsoever as a reward, which they hand over to the temple, to

¹ Paris: Librairie internationale, 1879.

which they are attached. We shall now briefly mention a few of the spiritistic wonders worked by the Hindoo fakirs.

One of the most common is that of the vase or vessel. The vessel is filled with ordinary water up to the brim; it is then placed upon a table in full daylight, and in the presence of all. All of a sudden, at a sign from the fakir, it moves spontaneously on the table, shakes, and turns in various directions, and at the end it rises to a considerable height, and all this is done without a drop of water being spilled. From time to time raps are heard from the various pieces of furniture in motion, as knocks, kicks, or hammer strokes.

The doors of the room open and close by themselves; cupboards and closets, although carefully and repeatedly locked, are after a few minutes found wide open, without any trace of violence. The objects which they contain leave their places, or return to them; sometimes they pass from one closet to another, though both be well locked, leaving nothing to show how it was done. Valises frequently move about by themselves, are emptied of their contents, are filled again, and rearranged.

When a fakir is invited to the house of a European, or of others, for the purpose of giving a proof of his achievements, he accepts at once. He goes scantily dressed, carries nothing else but

his bamboo stick with seven knots. When time has come to begin the performance, he will select as first number on the programme *the dance of the leaves*. He fixes a number of fig leaves, or others, on branches or little sticks of bamboo, at a slight distance from each other; then he puts down the little sticks in flower-pots. If so desired others may prepare them, and the fakir does not touch anything. When all is ready he sits down on the ground, extends his arms towards the sticks at a distance that a person may freely pass between. Almost immediately a light breeze is felt by the spectators, and the leaves begin to dance up and down the sticks with variable velocity; no visible cause appears to produce this singular movement.

A fakir can at will turn a weight of 150 lb. put on the pan of a balance by a feather placed on the other. A famous fakir on one occasion, in the presence of Jacolliot, simply by extending his hands towards a great receptacle filled with water, caused it to move and produce repeated knocks, without the level of the water being disturbed, as if it had been a solid mass. The same fakir, on another occasion, by putting his hand on a copper plate, caused sounds to be heard as of knocks on the plate. One day, holding his hands over a great bronze vessel, after one hour he caused the water to stir, and a pencil

suspended in the water to turn in all directions; then by touching the middle of the pencil with the index, it slowly sank to the bottom, when, according to all known laws, it should have floated. Another experiment by the same fakir consisted in this, that he rose in the air, and remained suspended motionless for five minutes, without any visible support. He promised Jacolliot that after leaving his house, at an hour to be determined by himself, he would cause clear and oft-repeated knocks to be heard in the dwelling-room of the French judge. He claimed to do so by invoking the spirits protectors of the French. The promise was fulfilled.

The fakirs can make—as they themselves confess—divining experiments by means of the spirits; that is, they can tell what is thought or what is going to be asked. For these experiments they spread fine sand either upon the ground or upon a table, and place in the middle a little stick of bamboo or other wood; then the fakir, seating himself in oriental fashion, and bending the body towards the sand, at a certain distance, he extends his hands towards it. Jacolliot then thought of a Sanskrit word. The magic stick rose and ran over the sand; after a little while it stopped and fell back to its former place. All could read on the sand the word thought of. On another occasion

Jacolliot asked: "What is the first word of the fifth line on page twenty-one of these extracts from the Rig-Veda?" The little stick moved, turned, wrote, and the word written corresponded exactly.

But this is not the whole extent of the fakir's ability. One may think of a word in any language, or of a verse of Virgil, Homer, or any other poet, of the name of a person; though dead for many years, the little stick will correctly reproduce it.

Among the many other wonders which the fakirs perform and attribute to the spirits, the hastening of vegetation is one of the most remarkable. Jacolliot tells of an instance which he saw in clear daylight, when by chance he met a fakir in the neighbourhood of Benares.

"I thought of greatly surprising him," so writes Jacolliot, "when at his arrival I expressed my desire of seeing the wonder of the immediate germinating and prompt development of a plant. 'I am at your commands,' replied the fakir, with great simplicity. I was somewhat disconcerted by this courteous reply, but I added quickly: 'Will you allow me to choose the earth, the vase, and the seed, which you will cause to germinate under my eyes?' 'The vase and the seed, yes,' he replied, 'but the earth must be taken from a white ant's nest, and must be thoroughly

pulverised.’ He ordered my servants to gather the earth, and to prepare it strictly according to his directions, and to bring me a flower-pot with a handful of seed of different kinds. In less than a quarter of an hour my servant returned with all the requisites. I took them from him, and then sent him away, as I did not want him to talk with the fakir. The fakir took the earth from my hand and put it into the flower-pot. He slowly sprinkled it with a little water and recited some of his prayers. Then he requested me to hand him the seed which I had selected, and a few yards of some kind of cloth. I selected at random a pepper-seed, and asked his permission to mark it. Upon his affirmative answer I slightly cut the rind of the seed, and returned it to him, along with a few yards of white muslin. ‘I shall now fall asleep with the sleep of the spirits,’ said the fakir, ‘but you must promise me not to touch either my person or the pot.’ I agreed to all that was demanded of me. He planted the seed in the earth, or rather the mud, then fixed his cane with seven knots near the edge of the pot, and covered the whole with the muslin. Then he bent his person towards it, extended his hands horizontally over the preparation, and by degrees fell into a state of complete catalepsy. He remained for more than two hours in this condition, without

moving a muscle, and without any indication of life. He was entirely nude, his sunburnt body shone, his eyes were open and fixed; the fakir resembled a bronze statue in a pose of mystical contemplation. In the meantime I had not kept my eyes from him for a moment.

“ After I had waited for two long hours, and the sun was slowly gliding below the horizon, the fakir breathed a slight sigh, and returned to life. He beckoned to me to come near, and raising the muslin from the vase, he showed a pepper plant of about twenty centimetres in height, fresh and green. He guessed my doubts, and took from the pot the little plant. On one of the two pieces of the rind, which adhered to the root, he showed me the mark which I had made on the seed two hours before. No substitution in this case was possible. He could not carry any in the clothes he did not wear, and he could not know that I had by chance selected a pepper-seed; furthermore, I had not kept my eyes off him for a minute. Having enjoyed my astonishment for a few moments, the fakir told me, with an air of hardly disguised pride: ‘ If I continued the operation the plant would bloom in a week, and bear fruit in a fortnight.’ ”

“ On one occasion a missionary, Fr. Valette,

sprinkled a plant—produced by the above magical process—with holy water, and caused it to die.

Dr Hentsold tells us in “ The Arena ” how one day a fakir took a great earthen vessel, poured into it water, weighing 4 to 5 lb., held it on his right hand while he raised the left to his forehead. Suddenly, and in view of all present, the receptacle began to diminish in size till it could not be seen except with a magnifying glass, and finally disappeared entirely. It took about one and a half minutes. The doctor, thinking the performance at an end, was about to leave, when suddenly a dark spot appeared, which went on increasing in size until after a minute the primitive earthen vessel reappeared, but this time filled up to the brim, and containing three times the amount of water which he had poured into it at first.

The same doctor also tells us of a feat more wonderful than the preceding. Yoghi, the name of the fakir, took a rope a few feet long, and of the thickness of a thumb. He held one end of it in his left hand, and threw with the right the other end in the air. The rope, instead of falling back, remained suspended in the air, even after Yoghi had withdrawn the other hand; it looked like a column. Then Yoghi took hold of it with both hands, and, to my great surprise, began to climb it; contrary to all the laws of gravity, he remained

suspended in the air, while the lower end of the rope was five feet above the ground. The rope seemed to lengthen, and Yoghi kept on climbing, until I could see nothing but his white turban. The glare of the sun tired my eyes, and when I tried to look up once again, Yoghi had completely disappeared.

A phenomenon of the most curious and apparently the most inexplicable, we might call it the wonder of wonders, yet very well known among the fakirs, consists in the fakir letting himself be buried for weeks and months, apparently dead, and when exhumed return to life as if nothing had happened.

These facts would seem incredible, if they were not of frequent occurrence, and vouched for by trustworthy witnesses. We shall only relate one, taken from Mirville, in his book "*Des Esprits.*" It is an account of an English officer in India, by the name of Osborne.

"On 6th June, 1838," he says, "the monotony of our camp life was fortunately broken by the arrival of a famous individual from the Punjab. He enjoyed a great reputation among the Shikhs for the fact that he could stay buried as long as he wanted. We had heard so many wonders of him that we were anxious to see him.

He told us that he had practised his trade, as he called it, for several years. In fact, this strange phenomenon has been repeated in various parts of India. Among the witnesses worthy of confidence I may mention the name of Captain Wade, political agent of Lodhiana. This officer has told me in all seriousness that he had assisted at the resurrection of this fakir—buried some months previously—in the presence of General Ventura, of the Maharajah, and of the principal Sikh officials.

“Here are the facts. After preparations, which extended over a few days, and which my pen refuses to describe, the fakir declared himself ready for the experiment. The Maharajah, the Sikh chiefs, and General Ventura met near a brick vault, built on purpose to receive the fakir. The fakir closed with wax all the avenues of air, except the mouth, and took off the rags he wore. Then he was wrapped in a sack, and at his request his tongue was folded backward so as to close the passage to the throat. After that he fell into a kind of lethargy. The sack containing him was closed, and the seal of the Maharajah affixed to it. The sack was then enclosed in a wooden casket, shut with a lock, and sealed, and let down in the tomb. A great quantity of earth was thrown over it, levelled, and barley sowed over it;

sentinels were posted to guard the grave day and night.

“Despite all these precautions the Maharajah had his doubts. During the following ten months he had the tomb twice opened in his presence; the fakir, cold and apparently lifeless, was in the sack. At the end of the ten months the exhumation took place. General Ventura and Captain Wade came to open the lock, break the seals, and raise the casket from the tomb. The fakir was taken out. No beat of the heart or of the pulse indicated the presence of life. To bring him to, one of the attendants introduced a finger into his mouth, to force the tongue into its natural position. On the top of the head only was any heat noticed. They slowly poured hot water on the body, and soon signs of life were present. After a treatment of two hours the fakir arose, and smilingly began to walk. This man relates that during the time spent in the grave he had delicious dreams, and that the moment of awakening is always the most painful. He is about thirty years old, his looks are repulsive, yet cunning.”

Mirville gives us another illustration, more wonderful still than the preceding.

The above facts are sufficient proof that the modern spiritist has a long way to go before he

can compete with his Hindoo brother. Admitting the truth of the facts we have given in the preceding chapters, and supposing even that we have not given credit to spiritists or fakirs, for all their achievements, we shall now begin to study the causes of these truly wonderful effects. The spiritists will admit, with all level-headed men, that from nothing, nothing can come; that nobody can give what he has not; and that a reasonable proof must be given of spiritism. The potentiality of numerous causes may be unknown, but an everlasting recourse to our ignorance does not offer a reasonable explanation. Sound reason compels us to accept the explanation which fully accounts for the facts.

CHAPTER IX

APOLOGY AND DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PHENOMENA OF SPIRITISM AND HYPNOTISM ¹

WRITERS, even brilliant ones, make a deplorable confusion, and detrimental at the same time to science, between hypnotism and spiritism. If we were to believe them, the phenomena of hypnotism are one and the same thing with those of spiritism; or at least the former, through their nature and manner of production, are on a level with the latter. Two considerations lead them, as a rule, to their conclusions. The first is that both the hypnotisable subjects and the spiritistic mediums are afflicted with neuropathy. The second, that from the phenomena of hypnotism there is a bridge to the phenomena of spiritism, so that frequently they associate, mingle, and alternate with each other.

Although we accept the correctness of these

¹ "Ipnotismo e Spiritismo," page 157, Dott. G. Lapponi; Roma, 1907.

considerations, we do not accept the conclusions which they draw from them. If neuropathic subjects are equally fit for hypnotism, and to be a medium for spiritism, this only means that they are more susceptible to exterior influences than others. If the facts attributed to hypnotism associate, mix, and alternate so easily with those of spiritism, this can only mean that they are distorted to serve as a passport for the others. In creation we notice many other phenomena in the same reciprocal conditions which we find between hypnotism and spiritism, and nobody has ever thought of confounding the one with the other. The summer storms produce both lightning and hail; but this does not justify us in saying that hail and lightning are the same thing. Wind, thunder, and rain in the same circumstances come simultaneously, or follow each other, yet the wind is not thunder, and neither wind nor thunder is rain. Each of the three has a different cause and a different physical evolution; that is why each one can exist independent of the other two.

In my way of thinking, hypnotism and spiritism have but one analogy, consisting in the wonderful facts attributed to both; and, indeed, if it is wonderful to see furniture move spontaneously and displacing itself, it is not less wonderful to see a living being, in the full vigour of life, with all the

appearances of death in lethargy, or in the statue-like immovability of catalepsy.

After due consideration we cannot help noticing that the wonderful facts of hypnotism are of very rare occurrence, while, on the other hand, those of spiritism have become very common. Besides, the wonders of hypnotism can be obtained by means of the ordinary laws of nature, as in subjects naturally afflicted with lethargy, catalepsy, or spontaneous somnambulism, while those of spiritism go far beyond the span of these laws.

With the exception of the one analogy of the strange facts noticeable in both spiritism and hypnotism, the hypnotic phenomena are, to my mind, entirely different from those of spiritism.

To be well convinced of it, we need only observe that, while the phenomena of hypnotism exclusively affect the hypnotised individual, those of spiritism, on the contrary, concern not only the medium, but all persons around him. Moreover, in hypnotism the hypnotised party alone presents the unusual conditions which make of him a curiosity, and whatever he does is within the limits of his personality, within the circle of his individual relations. Not so in spiritism. Here the phenomena, which strike the observer with astonishment, concern not only the medium, but all those present, and even absent individuals.

Even this is not all. Another great difference consists in this : that while the unusual phenomena of hypnotism are caused by the influence which another brings to bear upon the subject under experiment, in spiritism it is the medium who produces the wonders of which we have treated. The hypnotised subject is a patient, while the medium is a true agent.

More than this; while the phenomena which constitute hypnotism only concern living beings, those of spiritism appear even in inanimate beings. No one has ever tried or ever succeeded in exerting an objective influence on chairs, tables, or any other furniture by means of hypnotism, while in spiritism those various objects play a very important and sometimes the principal part.

Lastly, while hypnotism only represents a special condition in living beings, in whom, under hypnotic influence, certain faculties are devoid of activity in proportion as others become more efficient, spiritism, on the contrary, develops new forces, which are not usually seen in nature, and when these forces are active they tend to upset every natural law, even the most constant, the most universal, and, I might say, the most fundamental.

There is an abyss between hypnotism and spiritism; the one is clearly distinct from the other, and

it would be a tremendous and most injurious mistake to confound them. We dislike to think that such a mistake should be admitted, and purposely spread to discredit hypnotism, one of the most beautiful and most interesting acquisitions of modern science. We will charitably believe that it is the outcome, on the part of its promoters, of an imperfect knowledge of the argument under discussion.

We do not deny, however, that with the differences we have given above, hypnotism and spiritism in actual life do occasionally go hand in hand. We need not be surprised at that, because there are ever so many similar alliances in nature. But we should not forget, as we remarked above, that if hypnotism is occasionally associated or mixed with spiritism, this happens because the wonders of the one open the door to the other, and prepare it for a better reception; but this does not make them one and the same thing. Mix or unite two different things, that does not make them identical; water and wine may be mixed, and we then have either watered wine or wine water, but for all that water is not wine. In like manner, when hypnotism and spiritism are associated, are mixed or alternated, we may call it *spirit hypnotism*, or *hypnotic spiritism*, or *hypno-spiritism*, in which the distinct phenomena are united, not on account of

an identity of their nature, but on account of an accidental and precarious alliance.

Dr Lapponi gives us two illustrations of what is accomplished under hypnotic influence. A young lady, with little education, was hypnotised, and while in that condition recited a long piece of Latin oratory, of which she did not understand a single word. A young butcher, during a sudden attack of mania, recited whole pages from the "Phédre" of Racine; when cured he could not remember a single verse. Strange as this may appear, both occurrences are satisfactorily explained by science, without having recourse to spiritism.

CHAPTER X

SPIRITISTIC JUGGLERY

EVEN spiritists believe in the possibility of sleight-of-hand mediums, and in his book on mediums Allan Kardec devotes a whole chapter to what he calls interested mediums (twenty-seven). He confesses that in matter of manifestations everything may be simulated from the raps to the writing medium. The medium faculty is not given to make a parade on the stage, and whoever claims to have the spirits at his command may be looked upon as a juggler; this should be remembered, he says, when séances of spiritism or spiritualism are advertised for a given place and a fixed entrance fee.

Before attempting to explain the causes of real spiritism, it is proper that we should give a few well-authenticated illustrations of spiritistic jugglery. We shall preface these by a few observations.

First, it is a fact that modern spiritism has been

fostered and developed in the lands of strenuous life—America, England, and France easily claiming first place. Whether strenuous life in itself, with its mental unrest, eccentricities, and love for the wonderful, gives a partial explanation of it, we leave the reader to judge.

Secondly, the mediums calling forth the spiritistic phenomena are all more or less unbalanced and neuropathics. They bear a close resemblance to the soothsayers, oracles, and sibyls of olden times. We call, therefore, very appropriately, their condition during their spiritistic operations by the name of trance; in this state they are unconscious, therefore sick and irresponsible.

Thirdly, the story of spiritism reveals to us a process of progressive evolution which hardly agrees with the sincerity of the manifestations of superior beings. The spirits began by revealing their presence by the means of raps; then came the mechanical and biological phenomena, followed by written or spoken correspondence, first with the help of mediums and other means, then directly, without help, until spiritism attained its present perfection in apparitions and materialisations.

At first these apparitions and materialisations proved refractory to the photographic lens; afterwards they yielded, and many pictures were taken.

There is something strange about this. It looks as if the spirits had first to learn their rôle, and after a consultation among themselves to devise the means wherewith to manifest themselves. It may be also that spirits proceeded slowly to keep in suspense the curiosity of the people, not to frighten the timid of heart from the beginning, nor to awe the general public with the extraordinary number of wonders in their repertoire.

Fourthly, another most surprising feature about spiritism is the ease with which the spirits accommodate themselves to the tastes of their devotees. As the old Pythoness, in her oracles, always took the part of King Philip, so do the spirits to-day favour the opinions of those who consult with them. They are pious with the pious, loving with lovers, politicians with politicians, business-like with business men, learned with those who want to learn, dissipated with those who look for pleasure, gross and vulgar with the wicked. So in England the spirits are sceptical reasoners, sagacious; in Germany mystical, speculative, transcendental; in France frivolous, thoughtless, libertines; in America they are positive, dogmatic, bold; in Italy they declare themselves preferably pantheists, atheists, materialists. With the Mormons of Utah they approve and advise polygamy, while in other places, where wilful abortion is

commonly practised, they declare it lawful and obligatory. In Russia they are profuse in their praise of the orthodox religion, and encourage at the same time the Nihilist propaganda; in Spain, on the contrary, they desire that all spiritistic societies should unite and incorporate with freemasonry, and assure that their purpose, fundamental principles, and maxims are the same.

It is very strange indeed that the spirits all over the world should agree in just one thing, viz. in vilifying the Catholic Church; if they mention it at all it is to speak evil of it.

With these observations before our mind, it is natural that a doubt should arise, whether there is not some jugglery in spiritism.

Learned men have tried to explain spiritism and its manifestations by two theories: hallucination or illusion, and jugglery.

We cannot, however, admit either theory to explain fully all spiritistic facts. It is undeniable that spiritism lends itself far better than hypnotism to fraud and deception, especially with the ignorant, and with those who are willing to accept as gospel truths the grossest mystifications and the most improbable absurdities.

It is also readily admissible that the use of spiritism for filthy lucre must always have been a strong temptation to the leaders. It is therefore

quite likely that with the increase in the number of mediums some may have claimed a sort of supremacy over the others, and turned their superiority to their own advantage. To attain and keep this supremacy they may have deemed jugglery a necessity.

To prove that in fact it has been so, it has been noticed that noisy spiritistic séances have been immediately broken up when the police appeared on the scene, or when an interested party had a special guard around the theatre of operations, or when someone, supposed to be the cause of the phenomena, was removed from the room.

Public sentiment in some places accused the Fox sisters of jugglery towards the end of their career. Douglas Home, winding up his spiritistic mission by marrying a rich English woman, himself disclosed a few of the tricks he used in his avocations. It is said that the wonders of the Davenport brothers were explained for the greater part as mere jugglers' tricks, by one more skilled than themselves. So was Buguet, who claimed to photograph the spirits of the parents of his patrons, proved to be guilty of the most vulgar trickery, as appears from the records of a lawsuit in Paris, on 16th June, 1875, which ended in his conviction.

More recently has the discovery of spiritistic

jugglery on the part of the famous medium, Harry, by the Archdukes John and Rudolph of Austria, caused great commotion. Desirous of obtaining personal knowledge of the spiritistic facts, which they looked upon as sleight-of-hand tricks, the Archdukes, through the intermediary of a ring-leader of spiritism in Austria, Baron Lazare Hellenbach, invited Harry Bastian to Vienna, in the winter of 1884. He gave two séances in the presence of the Archdukes on 17th and 30th January; they aroused great suspicion in the minds of the spectators. The princes therefore requested another séance, and the date was fixed for 11th February of the same year. They were bent upon surprising the medium in the midst of his operations, and find out for sure whether there was any jugglery about them. They so arranged that the doors could be suddenly closed by means of a hidden mechanism, and prevent egress from the room in which Bastian was supposed to be lying in a trance, while the spirits made their apparitions.

The evening of the experiment sounds were heard, sparks were seen, raps came next, followed finally by materialisations. Suddenly a white and well-defined figure passed out of the room in which the Archdukes had seen Bastian lying on a sofa in a state of lethargy. Immedi-

ately they set the machinery to work; it slammed the door behind the white figure. The spirit frantically tried to open the door, but in vain. The Archdukes jumped at him, tore the clothes from his body; the spirit was no other but the same medium, Harry Bastian, in flesh and bone. Finding himself unmasked, he began to tremble like a leaf. The princes felt pity for him, and gently assured him that all was over, and that he had nothing to fear. A report of the discovery was duly made, and signed by all those present. A detailed account of it was given to the Press.

We repeat, therefore, that among the many wonderful phenomena attributed to spiritism, there are many vulgar deceptions and gross simulations.

In addition to the illusions, hallucinations, and vulgar deceptions, learned critics of the spiritistic phenomena have also detected what they call inconscient jugglery, practised by the mediums in good faith, which makes them unaware of the wonders accomplished with their intervention. The noise and the raps supposed to be made by the spirits, as also the displacing of the furniture, might be referred to this class of frauds.

Dr A. Flint, Professor at the University of Buffalo, New York, U.S.A., and Professor M. Schiff, of the Instituto Superiore of Florence, have demonstrated that certain heavy sounds, similar to

the dull sound of a hammer stroke, may be produced by a sudden contraction of certain muscles. Dr Schiff was so proficient in this particular exercise that he could cause at will successive and regular sounds to be heard. While producing them he either stood straight or stretched out on a sofa, with or without his shoes on. On 18th April, 1859, he gave a demonstration of that phenomenon before the Academy of Sciences of Paris. It was further clinically proved that the phenomenon may be produced at will or spontaneously. Dr Lapponi says that he can attest to a case of the latter variety that came under his personal observation. A young girl, afflicted with St Vitus's dance, was being treated in the clinic of Dr L. Concato, in Bologna. By a rhythmical involuntary contraction of the long lateral peroneus she produced dull, near sounds at equal intervals, while she was awake. When she fell asleep the sounds ceased, because then all the rhythmical involuntary movements of the muscles also ceased. By degrees it was proved that similar sounds may be produced by various other parts of the human anatomy.

In regard to the voices which are frequently heard in spiritistic sittings, the possibility cannot be denied of the intervention of a medium or of a ventriloquist accomplice. It is the art—not yet fully explained—of producing tones and words

without any motion of the mouth, so that the hearer is induced to refer the sound to some other place.

Learned critics further attempt to explain that the phenomena of turning and dancing tables may be caused by even the involuntary movement of muscles of the hands of those who form the *chain*, while others again call them involuntary, perhaps unconscious jugglery.

A committee appointed by the Physical Society of the University of St Petersburg, to examine the state of the question, incorporated in its report of 21st March, 1876, the above conclusions. The committee excluded the reality of various given phenomena, explained away others, with illusions, hallucinations, and sleight-of-hand tricks; for others it admitted imposture, though perhaps wilful and unconscious.

Far from us, however, is the idea so to classify all spiritistic phenomena! In nearly all things human, jugglery, fraud, and deceit may be discovered. Medicine has its quacks, science its false apostles, commercial institutions their frauds; but this does not justify the conclusion that everything in them is adulterated. In the case of spiritism this conclusion would be most illogical and inadmissible.

Up to now no one has attempted to brand as deceit the spiritistic manifestations observed and

controlled by Crookes, with the help of his mediums; especially those concerning the famous Indian, Katie, obtained by means of Miss Cook. On various occasions large sums of money have been offered to anyone who could discover fraud in certain spiritistic phenomena, and prove it; the money has not been claimed.

Furthermore, all discoveries of trickery on the part of a few mediums refer only to a few of their many wonderful operations; the others are silently passed over. Even the explanations of the tricks discovered have not always proved satisfactory. Many have indeed asserted that the spiritistic phenomena could be reproduced by a cunning juggler; but no one has ever shown what mechanism or what contrivance could produce them.

Can we believe that where so many have been initiated into the secrets of spiritism, without oath or pledge, no one became disgusted with the trickery and had a desire of exposing it to the public? Can we believe that it never occurred to them to turn such an exposure into a profitable source of revenue? So far no devotee of spiritism has had the courage of a Leo Taxil or others to engineer colossal frauds. Leo Taxil coined money with his lying revelations of masonic mysteries to the public. How is it that he has no imitators among the spiritists? Must we believe that where

so many practise spiritism in the family circle they are bent upon deceiving themselves, knowing, as they should, that the wonderful results are caused, not by the spirits, but by their own tricks? This strikes one as so absurd that this reason alone would compel one to admit that the phenomena of spiritism are not always produced by jugglery or fraud on the part of the mediums or their assistants. Without attempting to disprove that trickery has been able to reproduce certain phenomena which at first seemed traceable to spiritism, we still face the question how the existence of these spiritistic phenomena can be explained in the light of sound reason.

CHAPTER XI

VARIOUS SUPPOSITIONS OR SUPPOSED EXPLANATIONS

THE experiments of which we have treated in the preceding chapters, the severe test to which they have been put, the absolute trustworthiness of the experimenters, the many precautions taken to avoid all possible mistake, vouch with absolute certainty for the undeniable reality of spiritistic facts. After admitting these spiritistic phenomena, we must now proceed, as we would in all positive sciences, to study the causes and the probable consequences of the facts; a research which in this instance may prove a difficult matter.

Great scientists, after ascertaining the phenomena of spiritism, have given us also hypothetical explanations. Their opinions differ so widely, are sometimes so contradictory and apparently so absurd, that it might appear useless to examine them. But as we would not pass sentence without

considering the evidence, we shall briefly state the theories, give in a few words our opinion about them, and leave it to the reader to judge for himself.

1.—Chevreull thought he had found *in the unconscious action of the muscular movements* an explanation of the turning tables. He supposed that when the hands are put upon the table to form a chain, contraction of the hands occur, which would of itself be sufficient to produce the movement of the table, although no one may be aware of the contraction. This explanation is really too childish and inconclusive to merit consideration. How can a superimposition of hands on a table generate such energy as to raise a weight of 150 lb., as occurred in the experiments of Gusparin, and produce this effect even when the chain is broken? Can the contraction of the muscles raise the table to the ceiling, and cause the furniture of the room to perform a regular cake walk? What about all the other phenomena? Are they all the result of this imposing of hands? The above theory does not even explain an ordinary turning of the table. It remains in the first place to be proved that these muscular contractions really exist under these conditions. Let us suppose that they do exist, they are so slight as not even to be noticed. How can

they set a heavy table in motion? The theory, therefore, does not explain even the prelude to a spiritistic séance. The moving of the table is simply an indication of the presence of the spirits, and is always followed by another phenomena.

2.—Dr Ricket ¹ adopts the same theory in regard to the movement of the table, but he finds a different explanation for the answers, which may be logical, and often exceed the intellectual capacity of the medium. He claims that they are ideas, memories, or knowledge previously acquired by the medium, and which exist in his mind in a latent state, and are manifested unconsciously by means of the turning tables.

That there are many latent ideas in our mind which only occur to us when a sign, a fact, or any cause whatsoever furnishes an occasion for it, is self-evident. While this cannot be denied, it does not show the logic of Dr Ricket's assertion. In fact, if the reply to a question is nothing else but a latent idea in the mind of the medium, we must then admit the following conclusions: (1) That the answers can never exceed the intellectual culture of the medium. (2) That when the medium reflects upon his past readings, studies, and occupations, he should remember at least the base and the substance of such replies. Yet we find the

¹ "Les mouvements inconscients."

contrary to be the case. It has been ascertained a thousand times that the replies often exceed the mental capacity of the medium, and refer to matters of which he had not the slightest idea neither before nor after a séance. How shall we explain, with the aid of Ricket's theory, that a medium without the slightest idea of medicine, and with a very limited general education, can reply with scientific precision, and give the diagnosis of a case and its treatment? How can an ignorant medium speak languages he never learned, and of whose very existence he was ignorant?

Such was the case of Judge Edmonds' daughter, who, when acting as medium, spoke nine languages, and the dialects of the Chippewas and the Menomences; of Mrs Hoyt, who, knowing English only, spoke Italian at a séance? How can Ricket's theory explain how Senator Tallmage's daughter, while not knowing one note from another, did in spiritistic séances play to perfection selections from Mozart and Beethoven? Latent ideas in the medium's mind do not explain the above facts; they do not account for the writing nor for the other spiritistic wonders.

3.—Figuier ¹ finds an explanation of the turning and talking tables in the following hypnotic theory. When you stare, he says, for any length

¹ L. Figuier, "Histoire du Merveilleux," Paris, 1881.

of time at an immovable object, the cerebral tension tires the brain, and produces that particular condition which we call hypnotism. In this condition the subject is no longer master of his own will, thinks or judges no more. He blindly does what he is commanded to do, and has no recollection of his actions when he returns to the normal state. In this condition any suggestion or hallucination is possible. This process obtains in spiritism. When the chain is formed they all have but the one fixed idea before them—the movement of the table; this idea is of an hypnotic nature, and may develop such force as to turn the table. To explain the raps and the knocks, it is sufficient that one of those present continue under hypnotic influence, and this is the one who does the answering. This same explanation, says Figuiet, holds good for the written or spoken answers of the medium.

Finding no explanation for the photographing of the spirits, he simply denies and ridicules the fact.

The explanation of Figuiet rests upon a false foundation. (1) Because it is not true that at the séances the recollection of mind is required, as he supposes. Once the chain is completed those present may joke and carry on a conversation, and yet the effects will follow, often when the medium

is in another room, and in a cataleptic state. (2) Because the answers are often given directly, without pencil or pen, and are often written in a manner in which it would be impossible for man to write, as when the paper is held between two pieces of wood or glass. (3) Because to produce the spiritistic phenomena, the presence of a recognised professional medium is not required; many have proved to be excellent mediums all at once, and even without their knowledge. (4) Because his denial of the photographing of the spirits is in opposition to a few well-ascertained facts, since Aksakof, Crookes, and others have succeeded in obtaining a form, perfectly distinct from the medium.

When I see upon a developed photographic plate the figure of the medium and of a person who called herself a spirit, and was seen, touched, examined by most able experimenters, and whom all recognise as such, and when I positively know that there is no fraud in the photographic apparatus, sound logic compels me to admit that the photograph represents two distinct beings; that the medium is not the spirit, and that the spirit is a real being, entirely distinct from the medium. The explanation of Figuier has, therefore, the great defect of not proving anything.

4.—Zöllner, the famous astronomer of Leipzig,

offers a most curious and fantastic hypothesis as an explanation. He grants that many of the spiritistic phenomena are in absolute opposition to the certain laws of nature, and that, therefore, the present scientific theories cannot give a serious explanation of them. They are certainly the effect of a cause endowed with reason and understanding, obeying the commands of a medium; therefore the medium acts upon reasonable and intelligent beings. All this is correct. According to Zöllner the materialisations in spiritism would be satisfactorily explained if we admit four dimensions for the spirits. To appear to us, they take the three dimensions of bodies, as our eyes are wont to see them; all they have to do in order to disappear is to take a fourth dimension.

Zöllner admits in spiritism the intervention of intelligent and willing spirits; but, ignorant of the nature of spirits, he construes a fantastic hypothesis which, while destroying the idea of a spirit, does not explain what he attempted to explain. He does not say what the fourth dimension would be. The hypothesis, besides, implies a contradiction in its terms; he bases it upon corporal dimensions, whereas spirits have none.

5.—Not less ridiculous is the explanation offered by Fechner. It is in substance as follows: “Everything in this world has a soul. Plants and

animals have a soul like man, as also the earth and the stars; space has its inhabitants, and each has a soul. In the old religions these were called the spirits or the gods. All these souls, according to their grade, come into contact with one another. Especially do the souls of those who have departed and were dear to us, continue to mingle with us. These souls, mourned and tenderly loved, live near to us; in a measure they advise and protect us. Consoling as this thought may be, it is embittered by the fact that they are not entirely happy. On the one hand they expiate their past mistakes as in a sort of purgatory; on the other hand the trials of the first continue in this second life; while they cannot sin by acts, they can sin at least by thought. Hence temptations and struggles, incompatible with real happiness."

With this bundle of fiction Fechner thought to dispose of the wonderful phenomena of spiritism, but in reality he does not throw any new light upon the cause or the causes of spiritism. The only thing which appears admissible in his theory is that the causes of spiritism must be intelligent, immaterial beings.

6.—Aksakof, Counsellor of State to the Czar, admits for the spiritistic facts the presence of an agent other than the medium. Who is this agent? He offers in explanation a threefold hypothesis. It

is, he says, either a living human being, a human being that has lived on earth, or a human being extraterrestrial, of a species still unknown to us. He does not tell us which of these he admits, and he considers it an impossibility to prove the identity of the individuality which presents itself in spiritism.

7.—The rise of spiritism has caused unrest in the materialistic camp. No wonder that learned materialists have done their best to find a materialistic explanation for the spiritistic wonders. The idea that the cause or causes of spiritism are immaterial, intelligent beings, must of course be rejected *a priori*. We will give but two illustrations of their useless efforts so far.

A number of materialist writers advance the following theory. They suppose that in the brain there are two series of nerve centres, which form a polygon, having its angles in fixed spots of the brain envelope. The first series is formed of three centres of sense; that is, one receives the impressions transmitted by hearing, the other by sight, and the third by general sensibility. The second series, which corresponds to the will, has also three centres of motion, viz. one for the movement of the body, one for writing, and the third for speech. Above these centres is to be found the physic centre, corresponding to intelli-

gence and conscience; this centre may be in touch with all the others. But suppose that it is not, because absorbed in a thought, an idea, and in that case the action of the other centres is automatic or spontaneous. When now the motor centres of the second series are called into action, without the concurrence of the physic centre, we shall speak, write, walk, but unconsciously and automatically.

The theory of the materialist has no other existence than in his imagination; his suppositions are simply forced to suit the case, without a proof or an argument. It implies a plurality of personality in one human being. Impossible to take similar assertions seriously, and dignify them with a reply. With the materialist the whole of spiritism is a question of hysteria and neurasthenia. As a matter of fact, for artificial somnambulism hysterical persons are not the fittest subjects; and in spiritism the medium is generally not neurasthenic. The materialist, to force the conclusion in his favour, must also force the premises.

8.—Another illustration of a materialistic explanation of the phenomena of spiritism is Crookes' theory of psychic force. His theory may be summed up in a few words: "It is an undeniable fact that in spiritism strange phenomena are produced, which must have a cause.

This cause must be an organism in certain individuals, enabling them—by means so far unknown—to act at a distance, to move objects, and to play instruments. As the various organisms in every man are directed by force, which we call the soul, the spirit, the intelligence, so we must suppose that this same force produces motion beyond the limits of the body. To this force we shall give the name of *psychic force*.

In regard to Crookes' theory, which supposes a new force emanating from the body of the medium, and causing the spiritistic phenomena, we would point out that he *supposes*, but does not prove. Crookes has demonstrated the reality of the facts, but he fails to prove their cause. He grants the possibility of an intelligence, other than the medium, producing the effects, yet he claims the necessity of a medium. How can we admit, then, that this psychic force emanates from the body of the medium, when we should rather conclude that the medium is simply an instrument in the hands of the foreign intelligence. How can he establish the necessity of a medium when so many facts of spiritism have been produced without a medium? If the human organisms are moved by the soul, how is it reasonable to suppose that a foreign intelligence is the cause of the motion? How does he explain why his supposed cause

produces effects far exceeding the capacity of the medium in the natural order? How can psychic force account for direct writing, or telegraphic replies by the Morse system? How can psychic force endow anything with a form truly human, with a heart that beats and healthy, breathing lungs?

We must conclude, then, that the psychic force upheld by Crookes does not explain anything.

The materialist adds: "We do not know all the forces of organic or inorganic nature, and, therefore, since science may demonstrate in the future that what we now call childish and absurd is a stern reality, who knows but that psychic force may be such?"

We cheerfully grant that the future may have surprises in store for us. What was considered an impossibility a century ago is a reality now; wireless telegraphy is a proof of it. In our estimation of Crookes' theory we are guided by a principle admitted by all, viz. the effect must be proportionate with its cause, and the nature of the effect must reveal the nature of the cause. The unbiased inquirer cannot fail to see that the cause of the spiritistic effects must be a foreign intelligence, different from any of those present at a séance.

This opens the way to further inquiry as to the nature and the qualities of that intelligence.

CHAPTER XII

WHAT SPIRITISTS SAY ABOUT THE NATURE OF SPIRITISM

SPIRITISM is the pronounced enemy of materialism; it has converted many a materialist, whether or not for the better remains to be seen. It looks like falling from the frying-pan into the fire; the change does not bring them much nearer the truth. To show the fair-minded reader, however, that we are not prepared to pass judgment until both sides have been heard, we shall give the floor to the spiritists. While the other critics whom we have passed in review endeavour on principle to eliminate all preternatural elements as possible causes of the spiritistic phenomena, the true spiritists have a regular system, which, they say, will explain all the ascertained facts.

Lest we forget, their doctrine is not the product of their brain; they hold it, they say, by revelation from the spirits themselves. The standard-bearer of spiritism, Allan Kardec, has also been the mouthpiece of the spirits on the subject. Kardec

was born in Lyons, of a Catholic family, on 14th October, 1804, and obtained his higher education in Switzerland. He has written a number of books on spiritism. His ideal was the *unification* of the various religious beliefs, and spiritism occurred to him as best suited for the purpose. He made the acquaintance of a family by the name of Baudin; he was invited to the regular weekly séances at their home, and he accepted the invitation. He was put in communication with the spirits, and at first with one who, calling himself Zephyr, excellent, spiritual, satirical, gave him wise counsels when occasion offered. He now began to have numerous revelations. We shall let him unfold the mysteries of spiritism in his own words :

“ One evening,” he says, “ while at work in my office, I heard repeated low knocks on the partition wall. I did not mind them at first, but as they kept on with increased vigour and on different spots, I rose to examine carefully the two sides of the wall, to see whether the noise could possibly come from another floor. The strange thing about it was that when the search began the noise stopped, to begin again when I sat down to work. My wife entered the office about ten o’clock, and, hearing the racket, asked what it

meant. 'I do not know,' I replied; 'it has been going on for more than an hour.' We made a search together, but in vain; the noise lasted until midnight, when we went to bed."

On the day following Allan Kardec had a revelation from somebody who declared that the raps heard the night before were made by his familiar spirit, to show his dissatisfaction with what he was writing. We must here explain what spiritists¹ mean by a familiar spirit. It is the one who keeps close to a person, either through affection or through duty; his company is less serious and less durable than that of the guardian angel, or of the protecting spirit. The familiar spirit is generally the instrument of the protecting spirit. He busies himself for preference with the little details of material life, and shares in a manner in the privileges of the house. His mission is generally of a temporary nature, and subordinate to circumstances. If he is good, he abides within the just limits of his mission; if he be wicked, he takes on imposing airs, and tries to pass for what he is not. Often he manifests himself by sensible signs; sometimes even he appears visibly. Such was the familiar spirit or demon of Socrates.

The familiar spirit of Allan Kardec, upon being asked who he was, replied: "For thee, I shall call

¹ Allan Kardec: "Livre des Médiums," page 5.

myself *The Truth*, and each month I will be here at thy disposition for a quarter of an hour." He further promised to assist him in his work. In this manner Allan Kardec became very familiar with the spirits; he wrote under their dictation, and he revised his writings with their co-operation. Pleased with his zeal, the spirits told him: "Thou hast well understood the scope of thy work; the plan is well conceived, we are pleased with thee. Continue, but above all remember that we recommend thee to print the work when finished, and to propagate it, because it is of public utility. We are satisfied, and shall not leave thee again. Trust in God and go on."

The doctrine of which Allan Kardec is the exponent may be briefly summed up as follows:

The spirits, who manifest themselves in the séances, admit the existence of God, as do the pagans. They call him good, eternal, unchangeable, but unjust, because he gives the same eternal reward to the good and to the wicked, as these also, after a time of expiation, shall be admitted to eternal bliss. God creates spirits continually; they all are equal, and are sent upon earth and in the stars, to live successive lives in various bodies, in the immensity of space; if they commit any fault, they remain there to expiate it before final admission to eternal happiness. The

human soul is created with a kind of envelope, which is neither spirit nor body, namely, the *perispirit*, which is less corporeal than the body, and less spiritual than the soul. After the death of the body, the perispirit always accompanies the soul in its successive reincarnations in space, until after due expiation the soul is finally admitted to eternal happiness. By means of the perispirit the spirits make themselves visible and tangible in spiritistic séances; the spirits themselves assist at the reunions, and produce all the known effects. But how do the spiritists prove all these assertions? The spirits have so revealed, therefore, we must believe, is all the argument they offer. The spirits who have made this revelation are the chosen spirits, says Allan Kardec.

The crucial point for Kardec to illustrate was how the spirit could be united with the perispirit. He finds no other explanation than the following: "When we say that the spirit is immaterial, we must understand this, not in an absolute but in a relative sense, because absolute absence of matter would be nothingness. Mind it is the chosen spirits who suggest and teach this doctrine!"

We have not begun yet to examine in the light of reason and of faith the true cause or causes of spiritistic phenomena; we must, however, remark here, incidentally, that if the teaching of these

elect spirits is correct, God, who is a most pure spirit, must needs be an absolute Zero. Yet these elect spirits profess to believe in God!

Face to face with these enormous contradictions suggested by the elect spirits, some spiritists ventured to think that it was not merely the perispirit which acted in materialisations. Another good-natured spirit, calling himself *Lamennais*, and desirous of helping out his brother spirit, *The Truth*, suggested to Allan Kardec that the cause of the materialisations and of the movements of the table is an acting principle, which takes on consistency by appropriating flesh and bone from the medium, and, if necessary, even from the persons composing the audience. But where are the proofs that this is really the case? The spirit *Lamennais* did not give any.

Some spiritists, finding that some reason was better than none at all, thought they had a proof in the great weakness of the medium after a séance. This again does not prove anything, because all mediums, after the séances, are not in such a state of exhaustion; generally they are just as healthy and strong as before. But what about materialisations in the absence of a medium? Who then furnishes the fluid, the flesh and bone, to the perispirit, to make itself visible and tangible? The materialised spirit has allowed

himself occasionally to be weighed, and turned the balance at 20 lb.; how is it that those present are never aware of the loss of flesh and bone? What becomes of these 20 lb. of flesh and bone after the spirit dematerialises himself? Where does it go to? Is it returned to those from whom it was taken? Is it carried away in the air?

This is sufficient to give an idea of the contradicting testimony of the elect spirits. It is confusion and jumble *worse confounded*. Can a man in his senses really advance theories of this kind?

To arrive at the knowledge of the true cause of spiritism, after eliminating all absurd suppositions, we should know—at least in its main outlines—the purpose of modern spiritism. Spiritists, and Allan Kardec above all, should be able to inform us on the subject. In fact, a few select passages from the various works of Allan Kardec will fully satisfy us in regard to the end spiritism has in view. He has been favoured above all others with the doctrine of the spirits.

He claims that there are three important revelations. “In the law of Moses,” he says, “there are two distinct parts, that is, the law of God promulgated on Mount Sinai, and the civil or disciplinary law established by Moses; the first is unchangeable, the second is changeable, as it must adapt itself to

the customs and character of the people. Now," he continues, "Jesus has not come upon earth to destroy the law of God, but to fulfil it, that is, to develop it, to give it its true meaning, and adapt it to the gradual process of mankind."¹ (Kardec seems to forget that if the law of God is unchangeable and consequently always the same, it cannot very well adapt itself to the changes of human progress.)

"The law of the Old Testament," says Kardec, "is personified in Moses, the law of the New Testament in Jesus; *spiritism is the third revelation of the law of God*, but is not personified in any one individual, because it is the result of a doctrine taught not by man, but by the spirits who are the mouthpieces of Heaven, on all parts of the earth, through a numberless multitude of intermediaries. It is, therefore, in a manner a collective being, comprising all the beings of the spiritual world, bringing to men each his own light in regard to this world and the fate that awaits them." He adds that Christ has spoken of all things, but in terms more or less explicit.

We would ask here, if Christ has spoken of all things, what need is there of a third revelation? If He has said all, what is there to be added? Has the law of God and of Moses been given by a

¹ Allan Kardec, "L'evangile selon le spiritisme."

man? If God is not the author of it, how can it be called the law of God? What authority have these spirits, even taken collectively? What do they teach?

Kardec replies: "As Christ said, 'I have not come to destroy the law, but to fulfil it,' so also does spiritism say, 'I have not come to destroy the Christian religion, but to fulfil it.' It does not teach anything contrary to the teaching of Christ, but it develops, completes, explains, in terms clear to all, what has been said in an allegorical form. *It is therefore* the work of Christ, who presides Himself over the new regeneration in preparation for the kingdom of God upon earth."

Kardec had been trained from childhood in the Christian religion; for fear that his theories might not take with Christians, he endeavoured by every means to prove that spiritism is not contrary to the teachings of Christ, and that furthermore Christ presides over this work of regeneration by means of spiritism. We shall prove subsequently that Kardec's spiritism in all its details is in open contradiction with the teachings of Christ. Kardec's words clash strangely with a revelation of his own familiar spirit on 30th April, 1856: "There shall be no more religion, yet one will be needed, but a true, grand, and beautiful one, one worthy of the Creator."

The following questions and answers as reported by Kardec himself show that the spiritistic doctrine is a mixture of truth and of phenomenal errors. They are taken from Kardec's book, "Livre des Esprits." Kardec asked his familiar spirit: "Is God a distinct being, or rather the sum total of all the forces and all the intelligences of the universe combined?"

THE SPIRIT. If it were not so God would not exist, as He would be the effect, not the cause; He cannot be both. God exists; you cannot doubt it. This is essential; believe me, do not go any further, do not get lost in a labyrinth.

KARDEC. Does matter exist from all eternity, or has it been created by God in time.

SPIRIT. God alone knows. (*Matter then may be eternal, and the spirits justify a doubt about the creation of matter!*)

KARDEC. What is a spirit?

SPIRIT. The intelligent principle of the universe.

KARDEC. There would be then two general elements of the universe, matter and spirit?

SPIRIT. Above all there is God, the Creator, the Father of all things; these three are the principle of all that exists, the universal Trinity. (*The natural consequence of this spiritistic as-*

sertion is that matter, spirit, and God, are three gods. A queer doctrine indeed !)

KARDEC. Is universal space infinite or limited?

SPIRIT. Infinite. If you suppose limits to it, what would then be beyond it? (*Infinite space is a contradiction, because space means extension, and therefore refers to quantity; as there is no infinite quantity so there can be no infinite space.*)

KARDEC. Is there a vacuum anywhere in universal space?

SPIRIT. No, nothing is void; what looks a void to you is in reality occupied by matter, imperceptible to your senses, aided even by instruments. (*As matter, spirit, and God are the principle of all, so they must fill infinite space; downright pantheism!*)

KARDEC. As there are two general elements of the universe, the intelligent and the material element, would it be proper to say that the spirits are formed by the intelligent element, and the inert bodies by the material?

SPIRIT. This is evident: the spirits are the individualisation of the intelligent principle, as the bodies are the individualisation of the material principle; the time and the manner of this individualisation are unknown to us. (*Again all pure pantheism!*)

KARDEC. Is the spirit independent of matter, or

is it only a property of it, such as colours of the light, or sounds of the air?

SPIRIT. They are distinct, but the union of the spirit with the matter is necessary, to make matter intelligent. (*The union of the two elements makes human nature; matter, however, is not intelligent. The soul is; it acts in its psychic functions by means of the body.*)

KARDEC. Is it correct to say that the spirits are immaterial?

SPIRIT. How can you define a thing in the absence of terms of comparison, and with an insufficient language? Can a man, born blind, define what light is? Immaterial is not the proper word; incorporeal would be more exact, because you must well understand that the spirit being a creature must be something. It is a quite essential matter, but without analogy, and so ethereal that it cannot fall under your senses. (*The spirits then after all are matter; again a contradiction!*)

KARDEC. Do the spirits deny the existence of devils, because if they existed they would be the work of God, and would God be just and good if He had created beings eternally wicked and unhappy?

Here the spirits gave a chapter on Christian doctrine; they claim to be immortal, and assert that

God did not create the devils, but the angels, who after their sin were expelled from Heaven, and condemned to eternal torments.

The spirits then added that if there were devils, they are on our planet, and on other similar ones; they are the hypocrites who make of a just God a wicked and vindictive God, and think to please Him by their abominations, committed in His name. (An allusion probably to the Catholic Church!)

For the spirits there is no hell, although they have sometimes contradicted themselves, because as they are with God, the principle of all, God would be with them in hell. They do not admit purgatory either, unless we understand by it the various incarnations as a form of purification, before they are admitted to final happiness.

Jesus Christ, in the estimation of the spirits, is only a prophet, charged to fulfil the Mosaic law, like the spirits, and in turn must fulfil the law of Christ.

The spirits also teach that the indissolubility of marriage is contrary to the order of nature. When asked whether marriage was indissoluble by the law of nature, or merely by a human law, they answered: "By a human law, most contrary to the law of nature; human laws may be changed, natural laws only are unchangeable."

The reader cannot fail to see that the spirits

really perfect, fulfil, and explain the law and the doctrine of Christ!

Allan Kardec went on gathering some more revelations from his familiar spirit:

KARDEC. Has the human species begun with one man?

SPIRIT. No; the one you call Adam was neither the first nor the only one to people the earth.

KARDEC. Man had his origin in different parts of the globe?

SPIRIT. Yes, and at different times; this is one of the causes of the difference of races; then men, dispersing under different climes, and uniting themselves with other races, have formed new types.

It has always been held as a tenet of Christian belief that all men have their origin from the one primitive couple—Adam and Eve; anthropology assigns entirely different reasons for the peculiarities of races.

The above spiritistic teaching of spiritists makes it very plain that spiritism cannot possibly be the religion of Jesus Christ, that it, on the contrary, in as far as it is able, tends to upset and destroy it. This third revelation of the spiritist is indeed a strange mixture of absurdities. History invariably

repeats itself. Spiritism is endeavouring to do what some Galatians wanted to do in the days of St Paul, viz. introduce a gospel which would destroy the gospel of Jesus Christ. St Paul then warned the people not to mind them; he told them that the gospel received from Jesus Christ was the only true one, and he added: " Though we, or an angel from Heaven, preach a gospel to you besides that which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." ¹

¹ Gal. i. 8.

CHAPTER XIII

BIBLICAL AND SACRED HISTORY CONCERNING SPIRITS

SPIRITISM, according to spiritists, is a direct argument for the existence of spirits. The standard-bearers of spiritism concede the existence of impious, obscene, and wicked-minded spirits. Reason also proves the existence of spirits, and their moral condition. If we desire to know more about them, we must look up an authoritative source of information, which we find in divine revelation. By comparing the spiritistic phenomena with what revelation teaches us about spirits, we pave the way to a thorough understanding of these phenomena, at least in so far as authorship is concerned. It is unfortunately yet strangely true that those who give blind credence to spiritistic doctrine refuse to believe absolute truth.

Faith teaches us that the spiritual and intelligent beings of the other world are *God*, the *angels*, and the *human souls*. The angels were all created

good and happy, but they were not from the beginning confirmed in grace, and could abuse their liberty. A great many of them, yielding to a temptation of pride, fell, were punished by God, and cast into hell. Those who remained faithful were confirmed in grace. All had been enriched with a superabundance of supernatural gifts, and endowed with an intelligence incomparably superior to human intelligence. The fallen angels have lost for ever eternal happiness, but have kept those qualities and prerogatives which belonged to their angelic nature. In common parlance, and also in scriptural language, they are called *demons* or *devils*, and their leader *Satan*.

The good angels enjoy for ever the presence of God. They are the chosen instruments of God's kindness, mercy, and justice. So we know from the Bible that many of them are charged by God to protect the just from danger (Ps. xc. 11-13), to defend him against the insults of the devil (Tobias viii. 3), to present his prayers to God (Tob. xii. 12), to lead his soul into future life (Luke xvi. 22.) The angels on the last day shall go out, and shall separate the wicked from among the just (Matt. xiii. 49.) To each man is given a guardian angel to keep him in all his ways (Ps. xc. 11.) An angel protector is assigned to each nation (Dan. x. 13-21.)

The Bible also gives numerous instances of the apparition of angels in corporeal form. In such form the angels appeared to Abraham and Lot (Gen. xviii. 2, xix. 1), to Jacob (Gen. xxxii. 24 and fol.), to Balaam (Num. xxii. 34) to Joshua (v. 13), to David (2 Kings xxiv. 17), to Tobias (v. 12 and fol.), and to a great many others.

The angel Gabriel announced the mystery of the incarnation to the Blessed Virgin (Luke i. 28), and foretold to Zacharias the birth of St John the Baptist (Luke i. 11). The angels ministered unto Jesus in the desert (Matt. iv. 11); they appeared to the holy women after the resurrection (Matt. xxviii. 3). An angel led the Apostles out of prison and commanded them to preach Jesus Christ in the Temple (Acts v. 19). An angel delivered St Peter from prison and led him across Jerusalem to the iron gate of the city (Acts xii. 7.)

The reader will do well to consult these various references; they will convince him that after all spiritism is nothing new. To diagnose properly the cause or the causes of the spiritistic phenomena, or to differentiate the effects, we add a few remarks concerning the apparitions of the good angels. In human form they present themselves with a most pure and beautiful expression. When appearing as children they show themselves endowed with a celestial grace and candour. As

adults they appear in all the splendour of strength, nobility, and beauty. Generally they appear with wings to signify the excellence of their contemplation and their promptness in obeying the commands of God. Sometimes they appear under the form of a beggar to lovers of poverty; but always they express grace, purity, agility, light, love. Seldom do they show themselves under the outward appearances of animals, but then the selection is limited to the noblest and most mystic emblems, such as the lamb, the emblem of meekness, the lion, the emblem of strength, the dove, the emblem of simplicity, etc.

In the pages of sacred history we find numerous instances of angels taking part in the actions of the just. St Nilus, when saying Mass, used to see numberless angels around the altar and about the church. Frequently have the angels carried the blessed sacrament to persons anxious for it but prevented from receiving it; as in favour of St Stanislaus Kostka, when sick in a hospital; of St Bonaventure, the Venerable Ida, and many others. Often do they warn the servants of God of their approaching death, as St Simon Stylites; and St Aldegond; often they assist them at the last moment in their struggles with the powers of darkness, as we read in the lives of hundreds of them. Often have the angels shown themselves

visibly in defence of justice, and to repress the audacity of the wicked, as may be seen in the lives of St Wenceslaus, Duke of Bohemia, and St Henry, the Emperor.

The reader will find on comparison that there is a wide difference in the characteristics of the apparitions of the *good angels* and the *spirits* of *modern spiritism*.

Besides the *good angels* there are also the *spirits* or the *souls*, living independently of the body which they inhabited while on earth. Of these some are enjoying eternal happiness, and may have been raised to the honours of the altar, while others, not having fully atoned for their shortcomings on earth, are being purified before their admission into Heaven, into which nothing defiled shall enter; and finally there are those who died with the hatred of God in their soul.

Revelation teaches that the first are in Heaven, the second in purgatory, and the third in hell.

That the saints in Heaven have appeared numberless times to persons on earth, is a fact so certain and authentic that only those ignoring history and refusing absolutely to give any credence can contest it. We shall not speak of apparitions in dreams and ecstasies, which might be historically contested, but of real corporeal apparitions, visible to the human eye.

The mother of God has appeared visibly to a number of founders of religious orders, such as St Peter Nolasco, St Dominic, St Theresa, and in our times to chosen souls such as Bernadette Soubiroux of Lourdes. The Blessed Virgin, when appearing, sometimes shows herself in her prerogative of queen of Heaven and of earth, and powerful in her intercession, or her apparitions manifest the one or other of the different mysteries of her earthly or heavenly life: her immaculate conception to Bernadette at Lourdes, her birth, her divine maternity, her purification in the temple, her courageous love and mercy on Calvary, her assumption, etc. The apparitions of the Blessed Virgin invariably are of a sweet, noble, and most pure character, a foretaste of Heaven; their object always is to console, lift up, and assist the souls, and spur them on to greater perfection and holiness.

The visions of the saints are sometimes the effect of prayer in their honour, as when on her feast day St Clare appeared to St Theresa to encourage her in her work of reforming the Order of Carmelites. Sometimes they advise their friends of their entrance into Heaven, such as St Peter of Alcantara, who appeared in all his glory to St Theresa a moment after his death; St Aloysius of Gonzaga in the splendour of celestial bliss to St Mary Magdalen

of Pazzi. Sometimes they announce the hour of death to their devout clients, as did St Francis to Blessed Guy of Cortona; sometimes they show a particular interest in favourite souls—so did St Catherine of Sienna act as adviser to St Rose of Lima.

The forms in which the saints appear are either those which they had on earth, or with the emblems of their character and dignity, as in the habits or vestments of a bishop, a priest, a levite, or a religious; so has St John at different times appeared under the symbol of an eagle. The *virgins* and the *martyrs* often present themselves with the crown of chastity on their heads, and the palm of victory in their hands. Their *countenance* always inspires purity and celestial sweetness, and stimulates to virtue and holiness. In the apparitions their body is generally enshrined in a halo of light; sometimes they appear in fiery globes or brilliant stars, as St Germanus to St Benedict, and St Rose of Lima; light and fire are beautiful figures of their splendour and charity. A favourite symbol with the saints in their apparitions is the dove, the symbol of purity; so did St Scholastica appear to her brother St Benedict at the time of her death. The mystic figure differs from the ordinary bird in its splendour, size, and colour; this makes the appearance preternatural.

In regard to the apparitions of the *souls in purgatory*, we shall only mention the real visible apparitions. The object of these is to excite the piety of the faithful, and to obtain their suffrages in order to be freed from purgatory. History records numerous instances of such apparitions, as may be seen in the lives of St Margaret of Cortona, Denis the Carthusian, and St Catherine of Sienna. When they appear to implore the assistance of their brethren on earth, their countenance betokens sadness and pain, with entreating looks; they wear a dress of mourning, all intended to express immense suffering, and to excite deep sympathy. They may appear as in a cloud, a nebula, or any other form which by sign or word indicates the scope of their visit. They may also manifest their presence by groans or sighs expressive of suffering. Their whole appearance invariably betokens suffering, and an ardent desire of deliverance. Nothing is to be observed about them which does not reflect holiness, and excite sympathy in the heart of man for their sufferings.

Apparitions of the *damned* in hell have been so numerous and so well authenticated that it would seem absurd to deny their possibility. To give but one instance, we refer the reader to the life of St Bruno, the founder of the Carthusians. A lost soul appeared to him while his funeral was being

held in the church; the sight induced the saint to bid farewell to the world and hide himself in a wilderness.

What characterises the apparitions of the damned is that they always show themselves in human form, easy to recognise; they are encircled in flames, their voices express terror and fear, they break out in blasphemy, in curses, and imprecations. The purpose of these apparitions—by command of God—is a warning to the living to leave their evil ways for fear of the consequences in the life after death.

We now come to the apparitions of the devils, and of Satan, their leader. The inspired Book gives us a clear idea of what the devils are, and of their work among us poor mortals. We shall again ask the reader to look up the various references.

The devils are tempters (Matt. iv. 33), wicked (Acts xix. 12), unclean spirits (Matt. xii. 43), powers of darkness (Luke xxii. 53), adversaries (1 Peter v. 8). The devil was a murderer from the beginning (John viii. 44), he is cruel to the just man, invidious and malevolent (Job i. 11), he goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Peter v. 8). He endeavours to make all men fall into evil, and at the same time tries to hurt them physically (Acts v. 3, 1 Cor. vii. 5, 2 Cor. ii.

11), he is a sinner from the beginning, and instigates others to sin (1 John iii. 8); better to seduce others, he assumes the form of an angel of light (1 Cor. xi. 4). The doctrine of the devil combats faith and good morals (1 Tim. iv. 1); through the cult of idols, they make people give to them the honour due to God alone (1 Cor. x. 20-21). Satan is called the prince of this world (John xii. 31), the god of this world (2 Cor. iv. 4, Eph. ii. 2), the inspirer of treason (John xiii. 2). He enters into the bodies of men to torment them (Luke xxii. 3, John xiii. 27). The demons may produce different bodily diseases, such as loss of sight and of speech (Matt. xii. 22, Luke xi. 14), or of sight only (Matt. ix. 32), paralysis and epilepsy (Matt. iv. 24, Mark iii. 11, Luke vi. 18), insanity (Mark v. 2-13). Many devils may sometimes take possession of one man (Matt. xii. 13-25, Luke xi. 24-26, Mark v. 9); they try to catch people into their snares (1 Tim. iv. 6-7); they have a particular hatred against those who work for the salvation of others (2 Cor. xii. 7); they strive to prevent their enterprises (1 Thess. ii. 18). Deception is one of their characteristics, as in the case of Eve and the serpent (Gen. iii.).

The above quotations, from the revealed word of God, besides a great many others, outline very

clearly the nature, the actions, the habits of these evil spirits.

Sacred and profane history proves, with numberless real facts at hand, that the devils have always acted in the same manner.

We read (1 Kings xvi. 14-16, xix. 9) how an evil spirit came upon Saul, and inspired in him the ferocious and homicidal idea of nailing David to the wall with a spear, and how his servants sought to calm his horrible temper with music. Josephus tells us in addition how the evil spirits tried to choke and strangle Saul. In the gospel we read (Mark ix. 16-26) of an unfortunate father who brought to the Saviour his son, possessed by the devil from infancy. The evil spirit used to take him and dash him down so that he foamed and gnashed with his teeth; often-times he had cast him into the fire and into water to destroy him. Jesus commanded the evil spirit to leave, and it left him immediately. Three evangelists tell us of possessed living in sepulchral monuments (Matt. viii. 28-32, Mark v. 2-13, Luke viii. 27-33). No man could bind them, not even with chains; they always burst the chains and broke the fetters. Jesus ordered the unclean spirits out of the men. The spirits then entered into a herd of swine, which were carried headlong into the sea and drowned.

As Satan and his ministers are the jealous spirits,

trying at all times to make men sharers of their wretchedness, they have always borne a special hatred to those who, upon earth, lead the most virtuous lives; this has been so from the time of Job to the *curé* of Ars, and it will be so unto the end of the world. The story of St Anthony is well known: how the devil in human form tried to seduce him to impurity, and was vanquished. The devil, as St Paul tells us, may even appear under the form of an angel of light in order to deceive men more easily; he may then appear as Christ crucified, or as a saint. Sometimes saints have been misled by him; but a drop of holy water or a sign of the cross suffices as a rule to unmask the deceiver.

To show what the devil has done and may do, we shall give but one instance, taken from the life of the Blessed Vianney, the *curé* of Ars, in France. This is modern history. Generally at midnight three mighty knocks on the door of the rectory warned the *curé* of the presence of his enemy. If he did not awake at the first, they were repeated at short intervals. After giving himself the distraction of a frightful racket on the stairs, the devil would enter, then take hold of the curtains and shake them violently as if wanting to tear them away. The poor *curé* did not see how a shred of them could be left. It often happened

that the evil spirit knocked at the door; a moment later, without opening the door, he would be in the room, and begin to upset the chairs and move the furniture, and grope about everywhere. Scornfully he would call the *curé* by his name: "Vianney, Vianney!" adding threats and vulgar qualificatives: "*Hypocrite*, we shall get you! you shall be ours!" On other occasions the devil, without giving himself the trouble to go upstairs, shouted from the courtyard; then he imitated the noise of a cavalry charge or of an army on march. Sometimes he would drive nails in the floor with heavy hammer strokes, then plane boards like a carpenter, or split wood; then he would saw away all night, so as to make the *curé* believe that the whole house might crumble, or again he would make all the noise possible with pieces suitable for the purpose, such as glassware.

Often did the *curé* hear in the hall on the first floor a tramping as of a runaway horse, which would rise to the ceiling and fall violently back with its four hoofs upon the floor. At other times it seemed to the *curé* as if a herd of sheep passed over his head. The monotonous racket of course prevented the *curé* from sleeping. One night when he felt more uneasy than usual, he said: "My God, I cheerfully make Thee the sacrifice of a few hours' sleep for the conversion of sinners."

Immediately the infernal racket ceased, and the *curé* could rest a while in peace.

We could give thousands of historical facts from the lives of the saints, showing that the devil has always chosen the same artifices to deceive and ruin souls, just as he is revealed to us in holy writ. The first sin committed in this world was committed at the instigation of Satan; history lays at his door an uninterrupted series of lies, deceptions, treasons, and of all that is revolting, both in the physical and in the moral order.

CHAPTER XIV

A LITTLE SOUND THEOLOGY ABOUT THE SPIRITS

A SPIRIT is an intelligent, incorporeal being. The materialists deny the existence of such beings; for them all is matter. Spiritism, at all events, proves to them that apparently all is not matter. We call a spirit an incorporeal being. As corporeal may be taken in two different meanings, so also incorporeal. Anything composed of matter, which has quantity and extension, is corporeal, such as the elements, the plants, the animals. We call also corporeal whatever has even extension with that matter, and is divisible from it, such as colour, heat, etc. Incorporeal is the opposite of both.

The first question which presents itself is whether there is in this world an incorporeal substance. The world is the perfect work of God; no believer in creation will deny this. Not that we consider the world as the limit of God's power; such a thought would imply a denial of God's infinite perfections. It is, however, a perfect

work in its kind. In the absence of incorporeal substances it would not be perfect. This may be philosophically proved in the following manner. Every effect to be perfect resembles the ground action of its cause; for example, the effect of a fire is perfect when it contains nothing more than what fire was intended to destroy; the effect of a surgical operation is perfect if it is exactly what the operator or surgeon intended it to be. Now the creative cause of the world is God's intellect; therefore the world to be perfect must contain some intellectual creatures. These intellectual creatures must be incorporeal; therefore it is proper, to say the least, that there should be incorporeal creatures. These incorporeal intellectual substances are called spirits.

We will not deny, however, that between the incorporeal substance of a spirit and the spirituality of God there is an infinite difference. The spirits, though indivisible, are limited, whereas God has no limits, He is infinite.

The number of these spirits is exceedingly great, yet finite, because no number can be infinite.

We read in Daniel (vii. 10): Thousands of thousands ministered to him, and ten thousand times a hundred thousand stood before him. Job says: Is there any numbering of his soldiers? (xxv. 3).

Scripture also teaches us that to each man is assigned a guardian angel, taken from the lowest rank of the celestial hierarchy. The number of people on earth gives us an idea of the number of angels in one of the nine angelic choirs.

From some texts of Holy Scripture objections might be raised to show that the angels have bodies; we treat here not of the spirits or souls of men, but of the angelic spirits, good and bad. Certain texts indicate that the angels move from place to place, and as local motion is a quality of bodies, they would suggest that the angels are corporeal substances. Then again Scripture tells us of the speaking and singing of angels, and of their appearances in bodily form; all of which would show that they are corporeal. Sound reason, however, shows that this is not the case. (1) Because in their operations they do not need a body. As the good angel is the creature nearest to God, he partakes more of His infinite perfections; his actions are to understand and to will, but these operations do not need a body, therefore the angels do not need any. (2) If they had a body, they would not be any nobler than the human soul; yet Scripture teaches us that they are nobler than man. (3) If the angels were created to animate a body, they would not be perfect without it; just as the human soul is not perfect man when separated

from the body. (4) An angel is a more perfect substance than the human soul; now if the soul can subsist without the body, with far greater reason can the angel. (5) Matter is necessarily corruptible and dissoluble; if the angels had a corruptible body they would not be perfect, as man is not perfect until his corruptible body shall have become incorruptible in Heaven.

That the angels may assume human bodies is unquestionable after the numerous real apparitions recorded in Holy Scripture. If the bodies in which they appeared were not real, they could only appear to those in whose imagination they existed. It is not possible that the same outlines could exist in the imagination of the many without any reality. The angelic nature in such cases is not the form of the body, which they assume, as the human soul is the form of the body. According to the teaching of theologians like St Thomas, they form these bodies to themselves by divine power, out of condensed air; the light produces the variety of colours.

The demons may also assume a body; but there is a wide difference between their work in this regard compared with that of the good spirits. The good being God's ministers, and sent by Him, have the power to alter and change matter of themselves to produce colours, to condense air, or to

compound other matter for the formation of a body. The bad spirits have not that power; they cannot produce anything, except by applying the productive natural causes; as, for instance, to condense, they apply cold, to heat, hot material; they may apply causes to accelerate an effect, such as using heat to cause the sudden growth of a plant. We may suppose that in most cases these assumed bodies of the good as well as of the evil spirits are new formations of air, vapour, or other similar matter, although frequently they assume existing bodies; so did the angel, speaking through the beast of Balaam, and the devil to Eve through the serpent.

An angel or a spirit is not substantially present all over the world, and he is certainly in a determined place. If this were not so, how could Scripture say that Satan fell from Heaven? (Luke x.) In that case all the devils would still be in Heaven, and, like God, the spirits would be omnipresent, which is manifestly absurd. Again, if the spirits are everywhere, then the soul of man, after it leaves the body, being an incorporeal substance, like the spirits, is everywhere; in this case it is also in the body, and there would be no death.

As God made the angel a nobler creature than man, he endowed him with a brighter intellect, and hence the knowledge of the angel is far superior to

that of man. The angel knows future events when they necessarily follow from a certain cause; he knows the movement of the heavens, and consequently he knows future eclipses of sun and moon; so also, knowing the causes, he knows the future effects which generally follow from such causes. He does not know, however, future events, which are the contingent effects of a given cause; thus an angel, without a special revelation, does not know what a free mortal will do in the future, when the act is entirely dependent upon the will of man. God alone possesses such knowledge.

We read indeed of the oracles of the old pagans, in which the devils would prophesy future contingent events; but on examining these and similar oracles, we find that the devil plays the part of the amateur weather-prophet—always forecasting and sometimes guessing it. He knows how to cater to everybody's wishes, and how to play the part of an angel of light. His knowledge is undoubtedly superior to that of man; many future events which are the necessary effects of certain causes may appear mysteries to man, while the devil, knowing the cause, also foresees the effect. He is to mankind in general what the professional man is to the uninitiated. A drug may appear to me a lump of sugar, when the physician can accurately prophesy what effect it will have upon me in a given time.

The devil may know that a man's days are numbered when that man does not respect his approaching end; he may know that a house is fast decaying when there are no outward signs of it. The devil, however, does not know what acts in the exercise of my free will and what, aided by the grace of God, I may perform in the future.

The angels, both good and bad, are better prepared than men are to read our thoughts, when these are partially reflected in the exterior motions of the body. As the countenance of a child will often betray the mischief it has done, so a number of our thoughts of fear, anger, revenge, etc., are portrayed on our faces. The angels, however, do not know all our thoughts distinctly without any outward signs of them. Scripture attributes such knowledge to God alone: Thou alone knowest the heart of all the children of men (1 Kings viii.).

The knowledge of the angels is not acquired as human knowledge is by reasoning; we arrive from certain principles, by comparing, dissecting, and compounding, to new conclusions. The angels by their intellectual perfection are among the incorporeal substances what the celestial bodies are among material bodies; their intelligence is far more excellent than that of man. The need of reasoning for us comes from the fact that the

intellectual light given us is insufficient to show up to us at a glance all the conclusions of a given principle. The light given to the angel is most perfect, because he is the most perfect of creatures; therefore he need not reason out a principle to arrive at new conclusions.

The knowledge of the good and of the bad angel differs in regard to supernatural matters; while the good angel in these never fails, the devil, on the contrary, on account of his corrupted will, is often deceived, and his oracles on these matters are often far away from the truth. A good angel will never judge of matters supernatural without reference to God's will; he may see a dying person in the state of mortal sin, he knows that he will be lost if he dies in that state, but his judgment is conditional upon God's will; he says, therefore: "The man will be lost unless God work the miracle of his conversion." The good angel's love of God and of all that reflects the image of God is proportionate with superior knowledge. He loves man as the image of God, and as it is God's will dependently upon the free will of man, the good angel will promote God's eternal glory by doing all in his power for the salvation of man. He therefore cannot wish, do, or advise anything which would not be to the real interest of man.

In regard to the knowledge of the infernal

spirits, it is well to remember that the natural knowledge they received at the time of their creation was not lost through their sin; it was part of their nature, and nature being indivisible cannot be lost. Man, whether happy or unhappy, is substantially man; so is the angel, whatever his changed condition may be.

The supernatural knowledge which they possessed as a free gift of Almighty God, in addition to their natural gifts, has not been entirely taken from them, but has been considerably decreased. They are totally deprived of all knowledge which supposes grace and love, such as the knowledge conveyed to us by the gift of wisdom.

The demons are so obstinate in their sin that it is impossible for them to repent. This applies also to all lost souls in hell: If the tree fall to the south or to the north, in what place soever it shall fall, there shall it be (Eccles. xi. 3). Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched (Isaiah lxvi. 24), Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, which was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. xxv. 41). This same truth is inculcated ever so often throughout the Bible. As therefore the evil spirits will never have God's grace restored to them, they are deprived of every divine help tending to that; hence they can neither do nor will anything good.

If we read in Scripture that the rich man in hell begged Abraham to send Moses or one of the prophets to his brothers upon earth, the prayer did not aim at the conversion of his brothers, but could have no other than the selfish purpose of not having his own punishment increased. If we read of the devils occasionally telling the truth, they do so simply for the purpose of deceiving men at other times more efficaciously.

God spared not the angels that sinned, but delivered them drawn down by infernal ropes to the lower hell into torments (2 Peter ii. 4). This text shows plainly that a number of fallen angels are in hell. There are, however, evil spirits in the air, with God's permission for the trial of the good, in order that these, by overcoming temptations, may gather more merits. St Paul calls them the princes of the power of this air (Eph. ii. 2). Our wrestling is . . . against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in high places" (Eph. vi. 12).

CHAPTER XV

THE TRUE CAUSE OF THE SPIRITISTIC PHENOMENA

WE have seen in the preceding chapters that the explanations of these phenomena thus far are unsatisfactory; that none of them can withstand the scrutiny of sound reason, that they are unphilosophical and unreasonable. Yet the principle that nothing happens without a sufficient cause applies to spiritism as well as to everything else. The question now before us is whether a cause can be assigned which satisfactorily explains all these phenomena, or whether we shall acknowledge the mystery and admit our own ignorance.

In the first place, it is clear to all who have followed the evolution of modern spiritism with an unbiased mind, that the cause of all its phenomena is an *intelligent* and *free* cause. This is evident. The witnesses of these phenomena are at the séances all eyes and ears to detect any fraud or possible deception. The facts are such as we have related. Questions are put to which, by means of

haps or in writing, logical and reasonable answers are given. These answers cover grounds utterly unknown to all present; are given in any language, even when the medium is a child or a person without education. Who will deny that the party which answers understands the nature of the questions, has the knowledge of the information required, and has an intelligence to arrange ideas and form judgments, and has also the means to manifest them?

In the face of the facts before us it would be unreasonable to deny it. A denial would practically mean that no credence should be given to the careful and patient investigations of those learned men who have made a special study of them, and are therefore well qualified to pass judgment, that we should ever distrust the testimony of our senses, that we should declare as deception and false any principle of reasoning and causality, although the effect in every case must be proportionate with its cause. We take, therefore, as convincingly proved the following conclusion: the cause of the spiritistic phenomena is an *intelligent* cause.

It is, moreover, a *free* cause. It presents itself when called upon, it moves the furniture of a room about at its pleasure, it stops when commanded, it answers when it pleases, it produces effects as

desired, it distinguishes the various objects, plays, writes, and speaks better than could be expected. Can all this be caused by even the most perfect piece of mechanism?

The nature then of the facts clearly demonstrates that the cause must be *intelligent* and *free*.

The above conclusion is the almost unanimous verdict of all those who have seriously studied the spiritistic phenomena. The ancients attributed them to the spirits of the air, the goblins, to the good or bad spirits, to intelligent beings. The fakirs openly declare that their wonders are worked by the spirits, that is, by immaterial, intelligent beings. Holy Scripture and ecclesiastical writers attribute them to the devils; the spiritists to the spirit. Who is right? For the Christian the answer given by Holy Scripture should settle the question, but to show that faith and reason do not clash, we will proceed to reason out the true cause of modern spiritism.

Lombroso, though a materialist, does not deny that the facts are true and dependent upon an intelligence which, he claims, is the intelligence of the medium, manifesting itself by vibrations of the brain. Crookes, on the evidence of his own experiments, admits that the facts exist, and are caused by an intelligence other than that of those present; in an effort to avoid the preternatural, he

has recourse to psychic force, which does not explain anything.

Gibier, though a rationalist, declares that the cause seems to be independent, and that it is an intelligent cause. Figuier without proof or reason attributes the facts to the intelligence of the medium in a hypnotic state.

Zöllner declares that the cause in question must be endowed with intellect and will, because it obeys an intelligent and free being, namely, the medium. Aksakof endeavours to find an explanation in an intelligent agent, different from the medium.

We may safely say that common opinion attributes the authorship of the spiritistic facts to an intelligent and free cause. The only practical difference in the various explanations consists in the nature of that cause, which for some is material and connected with the medium, or dependent on the will of those present, or on the unconscious vibrations of the brain, or on the spirits directly. Others, after having ascertained the facts and attributed them to an intelligent cause, abstain from studying the nature of that cause in the belief that such study is not in the domain of positive science.

We take it as sufficiently demonstrated that the facts necessitated the presence of an intelligent and free cause, responsible for the wonders of spiritism. The experiments which we have reported, and

which are substantially the same, also prove that this intelligent and free cause is not material.

As a matter of fact, when evoked, it enters in spite of obstructions; doors shut with lock and key, windows closed, and every other opening in the room carefully blocked, prove to be no obstacle to the entrance of that cause. During a séance it moves furniture around the room without touching or hurting anyone; when commanded it carries messages at great distances, it takes objects from one place and deposits them far away in the midst of a meeting. When it appears in human form, it often shows itself suddenly as a vapour or a little cloud, which slowly assumes the form of man; it extends its hands, which, however firmly grasped, resolve into vapour again. All these facts show that the cause is immaterial. Yet this cause is capable of manifesting a corporeal appearance, and acting upon our senses as a real body. It sees, though unseen, even in the dark; it performs its wonders in darkness or in the light; it develops a superhuman strength.

Therefore the intelligent and free cause is immaterial, and belongs to the world of spirits. Though the soul of man is also a spirit, it cannot be the cause of the spiritistic phenomena. A cursory examination of the facts will prove conclusively that the cause must be *preternatural*.

At the séances many effects are obtained which are contrary to the common, certain, and unchangeable laws of nature. It is against the laws of nature that musical instruments should play and continue to play when carried through the air, unless someone sustains and touches them. It is against the laws of nature that a table, a stone, or anything similar answers questions in any language by conventional signs. It is against the unchangeable law of gravity that heavy objects or the medium be raised and carried through the air, without a proportionate cause. It is against the nature of matter that bodies by themselves change in weight for a given time. It is against the certain unchangeable laws of optics that sparks, lights, luminous globes, and haloes should appear without a corresponding cause to produce them. It is against the laws of acoustics and physiology that sounds, words, songs, murmuring of voices, should be heard in the air without instruments or vocal organs. It is against the laws of nature that a pencil puts itself into motion and writes on paper in any language propositions which indicate judgment on the part of the writer. It is absolutely absurd that the surface of two pieces of wood, superposed and sealed, can cover itself with the perfectly imitated handwriting of persons long deceased. It is against all the laws of nature that

an object from a great distance can in a moment be put down in the midst of an assembly. It is against the common laws of nature for visible and tangible human forms to appear, as if they were living human beings. It is against the certain unchangeable laws of vegetable growth that a seed can in a few moments produce a robust tree with flowers and fruits. It is against the laws of nature that a man buried alive can live in the grave for months. It is against the laws of meteorology that in a closed room the wind rises and the temperature falls several degrees without the proper physical cause. The preternatural in all these manifestations is as clear as daylight; it is impossible to deny it.

The spirits in the other world are either good or bad. The tree is known by the fruit. If the fruits of spiritism are good, they must be ascribed to the good angels; if the fruits are bad, the devil alone can be responsible for them. In arguing as to the morality of the effects of modern spiritism, we must start from certain reasonable principles, and the conclusion will indicate beyond the shadow of a doubt the nature of the cause.

The spirits of spiritism pretend that they have no other desire but to follow and illustrate the doctrine of Jesus Christ. Yet we have seen in the preceding pages that their teaching is exactly the

reverse, and can have no other aim but to destroy the religion of Jesus Christ. They invariably deny the divinity of Christ, and the eternity of hell : two fundamental principles of all forms of Christian teaching. Sometimes they openly proclaim their hatred of God and of men, especially of Christians. They admit and defend pantheism and materialism. They put on the appearances of piety or of wickedness, according to the character of the persons they are dealing with. They are earnest defenders of polygamy and of the dissolubility of marriage. They continually contradict themselves. They treat their devotees with anything but decorum; they pull their hair, slap them, throw them on the ground. In the presence of ladies they often take the liberty of uttering villainous and indecent words, suggestive of evil. They permit themselves licentious acts on the assembled guests. Strange to say, they have a terrible fear of sacred relics.

With the movement of the furniture they make an infernal racket; they hide what they please, and raise their voices to screams and cat-calls. They pretend to be the spirit which is called up, and imitate its voice and gestures. They fight among themselves, and insult each other at pleasure. Lying seems to be their predominant quality. They take delight in designing on paper or on boards obscene pictures to excite passion, as one of

the most famous spiritists, Louis Constant, assures us.¹ He even mentions actual assaults on the part of the spirits. Many other writers on the subject corroborate this statement, but silence on these matters is golden; respect for the reader prevents us from saying more about this. We shall only add that Allan Kardec² found in a theatre a multitude of materialised spirits, diverting themselves in a scandalous manner, and he further assures us that their communications are often “repugnant to any person with a remnant of delicate feeling, because those spirits, according to their character, are trivial, obscene, insolent, arrogant, and wicked. Some spirits,” adds Kardec, “are real hypocrites; along with many good things they suggest with studied perfidy lying assertions for the purpose of deceiving the good faith of their hearers.”

We may take it for granted that the spirits show themselves and actually are audacious, vile, hypocritical, and all that is wicked. Kardec himself gives us the assurance of it: “The spirit has often no other aim than to harm; as he himself suffers so he wants others to suffer; he finds his delight in vexing and tormenting them. Some-

¹ Eliphas Levi: “Clef des grands mystères,” Paris, 1861.

² “*Livre des Médiums.*”

times also the spirits act out of hatred and of jealousy of the happiness which others enjoy. Others are spurred on by a sentiment of villainy, which prompts them to take advantage of the moral wickedness of those whom they know to be incapable of resisting."

We must not lose sight of the fact that the teaching of the spirits, as learned from their own communications, forms not only a philosophical, but also a religious system with its dogmas and places of worship; there are many of these in America and in Europe. Their ritual is a vile parody of the rites of the Catholic Church. The religious and moral system of spiritism is diametrically opposed to Christianity, and resembles Buddhism with its metempsychosis of souls, ever on the move towards eternal rest.

With all the facts before us, can we reasonably suppose that the souls of the dead take a delight in deceiving the living? Can anyone reasonably imagine that such is the destiny of the human soul after death? The condition of the soul beyond the grave would in that state be a thousand times worse than in this life, because then its occupation would be to deceive, to suggest wicked doctrine, to excite to evil, to vex the living, to destroy religion, and raise on its ruins a temple to Satan.

But no, this is not the mission of the soul after

death! Reason convinces us that the souls of the dead cannot take part in all these childish tricks, and in the ungodliness of spiritism. Reason will not admit that they are ever at our disposition, and cheerfully agree to satisfy our curiosity. The human soul feels in itself a firm yearning for lasting happiness, which is not of this life. Our mind is continually in search of something sublime, which will satisfy its craving for knowledge and truth. Our heart is made to love; how can it find its desire in the revelations of the spirits, who offer nothing but villainy, ridicule, contradiction, and impiety? How can we seriously suppose that our soul, freed from the body, must purify itself in the other world by a process of metempsychosis more or less long, while it is condemned at the same time to torment others and to deprave them?

This is a thought too crude, too repugnant, to mind and heart; it destroys the sweetest and most consoling hopes and aspirations of our conscience; it would make us feel as if non-existence were preferable. How can our heart be satisfied with a future that degrades the dignity of our soul, that smothers all that is noble in our existence? What solace, what incentive to duty, can the thought bring us that after death our souls will dwell in other beings, when neither reason nor experience prove this a reality or even a possibility?

Reason rebels against the thought that the souls of the dead shall serve to amuse the living, that they can be called forth by any medium, and then fill the rôle of a conjurer, an impostor, or a clown, and continue to deprave the hearts and minds of those who lend them a willing ear. A thousand times no! They cannot always be around us, ever ready to obey our call and to take part in our séances. Religion offers us other means of consolation, when death thins the ranks of those who were dear to us.

Spiritism teaches that there is no eternal hell; that consequently the souls of the wicked—who died with a curse on their lips and the hatred of God in their heart—shall through successive incarnations in various beings throughout space be purified, be admitted to eternal bliss, and enjoy God Himself.

Spiritism places the murderer, the thief, the adulterer, on a level with those who upon earth bore the cross of Christ, and shed their blood for Him. The human mind still more rebels against the thought that with God, essentially just and holy, virtue and vice, good and evil, justice and injustice are one and the same thing, and that the same reward awaits all.

The moral order, which is the basis of all civil society, would be a mockery, an inconceivable

insult to man. The sting of remorse after a fault, the hope of reward after a good deed, which is so deeply laid in the heart of every mortal, would be meaningless nonsense. We may then resolve to leave the souls of our departed in peace, not to disturb the solemn rest of the grave, nor to make them responsible for the phenomena of spiritism.

The spiritists, of course, place implicit confidence in the assertions of their spirits, who claim that the souls of the departed are the cause of the wondrous phenomena. The proof they give of it is that when addressed the spirit declares himself to be the spirit of so-and-so, and confirms his statement by a number of particulars, unknown perhaps to all present, but which upon verification prove to be correct; the voice and the writing are perfect imitations. But is all that sufficient to prove with any degree of certainty that the apparent cause is one and the same with the spirit called? It may *seem* so.

Not long ago the spirit of Blessed Vianney, the famous *curé* of Ars, was called up, and the answers given by the spirit were totally opposed to Catholic doctrine, so tenaciously upheld by the *curé* during his life. Shall we blindly believe whatever the spirit asserts, when as a matter of fact he may be the father of lies? One capable of so many greater

wonders may certainly be credited with a perfect imitation of the voice and the writing of anyone.

If the cause of the spiritistic phenomena is *preternatural, immaterial, and free*, and cannot possibly be the soul of a departed human being, we must then necessarily look for the cause among another class of intelligent beings, outside of the world of matter and of our senses. Reason by itself knows of no other intelligent beings but God and man. Revelation, however, has come to the rescue, and has manifested to us the existence of other spirits, created all good, of whom a great number, through their own fault, have lost all goodness. Hence the two classes of spirits in the world unseen—the good angels and the devils. Revelation is to the Christian a far more solid proof than the deductions of our reasoning from certain principles.

In dealing with the spiritist we stand on common ground when we assign the authorship of the spiritistic phenomena to the spirits. We differ, however, about the nature of the intelligent, free beings of the other world. We are absolutely certain that there are angels and devils. On examining the wonders of spiritism, it is clear that the traits of that free and spiritual intelligence—as outlined in their words and in their works—are attributable only to the devils, the sworn enemies of God and man. Can we for a moment suppose that

the good spirits, the friends of God, could ever be guilty of attempts to destroy Christianity, to raise altars to the demons, to deny the divinity of Jesus Christ, to proclaim the dissolubility of marriage, to suggest moral evil, to amuse the people childishly, to practise insulting jokes, to be ever willing to satisfy human curiosity? Could a teaching substituted for the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and proposed as a new gospel, ever be thought of by the chosen spirits enjoying God in the beatific vision? By comparing the characteristics of the good angels as given us by revelation, with those as furnished by spiritism, there can be no doubt as to the cause of the spiritistic phenomena.. The facts are indisputable, as we have fully established, but equally evident is the cause. When illusion is set aside, and prejudice discarded, and when we then reason according to the rules of common sense, and of revealed truth, the cause of the phenomena in question will appear in its true light.

The cause of the spiritistic phenomena is no other, and can be no other, than the army of demons, led by Satan, who are ever going about seeking whom they may devour, ever bent upon deceiving man, from Adam and Eve down to the last man that shall be born; their hatred of God, whom they have lost, and of souls, spurs them on in their nefarious mission of endeavouring to make all

men their partners in an everlasting hell. Enemies of God, they seek to enlist others under their flag; creatures of darkness and of error, they spare no pains to darken the intellect and harden the heart of man; murderers from the beginning, they keep on killing both body and soul; always deceivers and liars, they betray in all their manifestations these low characteristics; unclean spirits, they offer licentiousness as a bait to their deluded victims; hypocrites, they hide their poisonous fangs like snakes in the grass.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PRESENT STATE OF SPIRITISM AND WHERE IT LEADS TO

ALLAN KARDEC, the great apostle of spiritism in France, wrote in his "Revue Spirite" a short while before he died, on 30th March, 1869: "Spiritism continues its forward march throughout the world." He did not put it too strongly.

Spiritism has held various international congresses—at Brussels in 1884, at Barcelona in 1886, at Paris in 1889, in London in 1898. In 1889 the congress in Paris was held by the Grand Orient; that year was the centenary of the French Revolution, and there were about five hundred delegates. To the congress of 1900 in Paris an invitation had been extended "to all Catholics of the two hemispheres, priests and laymen, who cannot remain strangers to the scientific revival, which leads humanity to that glorious end, intended by the divine Master."¹ Magnetisers, spiritists, hermetists, theosophists, and independent

¹ "Revue du monde invisible," Sept., 1899.

spiritualists flocked to Paris for the occasion from all parts of the world.

Denis, who had presided over the congress of 1889, was again called to the chair in 1900. In his inaugural address he said: "At the time of the congress in 1889, spiritism saw many obstacles ahead; its progress was uncertain. To-day the number of followers is multiplied, the public and the Press are curious about it. We have recruits in the world of science, and in the highest circles of society. The occult powers are at work, and sustain the action of men. After a period of extension must come a period of organisation. The present hour is one full of hope and of promise, the masses having been stirred by the secret work of thought; intelligence and conscience are in search of a new ideal. Spiritism is a powerful germ which will develop and bring about a transformation of laws, of ideas, and of social forces. Spiritism must help towards transforming science. It will produce a transformation of religions. It will do the same for education. It will show its powerful influence on social economy and in public life. Spiritism can no longer be impeded in its forward march; it enters into the minds and hearts of millions of men."

The delegate from the United States, Charles Libert, said: "We have a hierarchy. The

principal society is the National Society, with headquarters at Washington. This society was chartered in 1893. The members have relations of joint liability with the particular societies. Each state has a society with headquarters at the capital city, and each city, each village, has its society affiliated with the National Society. These societies buy property on which to build an auditorium in which the conferences are held. One conference is held in the morning, and one in the afternoon; once a week there is a concert and ball."

Mary Longley, secretary of the National Society of Washington, said that there were in the United States twenty-five thousand militant spiritists. Ten thousand mediums are at work, and the eighty-two churches possess property valued at more than fifteen million dollars.

In 1903 the Annual Conference of Spiritists of New York State was held in Chicago. The chairman spoke of the ordination of spiritist ministers. He regretted that more interest was not taken in the spiritist schools for children, and announced that a special committee had been appointed for the purpose of erecting another school for the formation of mediums.

The Brazilian Federation of Spiritists sent to the International Congress of 1900 a report which

covered ten of the twenty states of the republic; no report was received from the remaining ten. According to this report, in the ten states there were seventy-nine societies. The first spiritist paper was printed in 1869; forty reviews followed it. The membership is ten thousand, taken from all classes of society.

The delegate from Columbia said that the spiritistic idea had taken hold of all the republics of South America, and had made great progress among the cultured classes. "At Bogota, the capital of Columbia," he said, "we have practised spiritism for thirty years, and have our regular meetings."

Mr Stannard spoke in the name of his English co-spiritists: "Spiritism is spread all over England. There are many societies in London, and every Sunday very successful meetings are held. Those present offer prayers, and invoke the spirits, and the mediums speak in a state of ecstasy. Spiritism is especially active in the north, at Manchester, Liverpool, and Birmingham. Propaganda is made among all classes, but especially among the poor."

That the spiritists are in earnest is evidenced by the fact that the moneyed men among them are willing to open their purses. At the Annual Congress of the National Spiritistic Union of

England, held in London on the 4th and 5th of July, 1903, John Ainsworth, of Blackpool, made the offer of a building for a spiritists' school for children; he further agreed to endow it, if possible. In the same year Alexander Aksakof left by will one hundred thousand francs to the London Society for Psychic Research. At the same time he left to the public library of Petersburg the most complete collection of books on the subject.

At the congress of 1900, the delegate from Holland made also a very flattering report on spiritistic conditions in his country.

Spain was represented. Its delegate reported meetings at which four thousand persons had been present.

The report of the International Congress of Paris in 1900 covers seven hundred and thirty pages in octavo. We take from the report a few more items concerning spiritism in France, the country of extremes.

The delegate from Lyons reported the existence in his city of two great societies, of schools for the training of mediums, and a clinic, which received every Friday from seventy to eighty patients.

The delegate from Tours reported that the first society—of which he is the secretary—was formed in 1893. There is a meeting every other week. He gave the congress some strange particulars of

these meetings, and of four spirits who manifest their presence without prejudice to others less high.

Paris had in 1889 four thousand spiritists, divided into many societies. The most interesting part of this report covers the faculty of hermetic sciences, which receives students and confers degrees upon examinations covering all subjects on the programme for the current year.

Spiritists are divided into two camps: the first endeavours to find for the phenomena a scientific explanation; the other is bent upon forming a new religious organisation. Spiritism wants to be recognised by science. Various hypotheses have been offered in explanation—electric fluid, vital fluid, perispirit, etc. etc. We have proved how fallacious these are.

The spiritists enter into frequent communication with certain intelligences. When asked who they are, the answer is invariably: "We are the spirits of the dead." The logical answer to the question should be, as we have seen in the preceding chapter: "We are the fallen angels; we are devils."

Sin has brought forth their condemnation to eternal torments, but it has not destroyed their nature. "You believe, perhaps," says Bossuet,¹

¹ Second sermon for the 1st Sunday of Lent.

“that their ruin has disarmed them, and that having fallen from so high, they could not have kept their powers. Undeceive yourselves, Christians, all is left to them except justice and holiness.

In the event even of scientists successfully demonstrating the action of natural forces in the spiritistic phenomena, this would not necessarily exclude the presence and the intervention of the devils. The intelligence which puts the natural forces into motion is not that of men, but that of the devil.

The purpose of spiritism, its ultimate end, is the destruction of Christianity in general, and of the Catholic Church in particular. Hatred to the Church is its motto. Allan Kardec's vocabulary is a clear indication of it; the teaching of the spirits, when made to those who have been gradually prepared, ever tends in the same direction.

A few years ago a writer in the “*Revue du monde invisible*”¹ said: “The spirits called up are the architects of the building of the future; they leave it to the workers to lay the rough foundations of it.”

These willing workers are all the enemies of the Church, and also those indifferent Christians, who dream of a more universal Church without any barriers, in which a natural sort of religion, suiting

¹ May, 1902.

both Jew and Gentile, would be substituted for the religion of Jesus Christ.

The "Revue du monde invisible," in its numbers of February and April, 1903, treated at length of a medium who, by reason of her social position, of her education, and of many other circumstances, is supposed to be one of the greatest contemporary mediums. She is Princess Mary Karadja, daughter of a Swedish senator, born at Stockholm, 12th March, 1868. At the age of twelve she knew perfectly French, English, and Swedish, and was then learning German, Italian, and Spanish. On 24th April, 1887, she married Prince Karadja, Turkish minister at the Hague. Seven years later she was left a widow, with two boys. She was not affiliated with any particular creed. Tired of life, she said she could never see a funeral without a sigh of jealousy. She then joined the spiritists, and began writing in favour of the new doctrine. Her printed works were intended—like those of Swedenborg—to contribute to the establishment of a Christian spiritism, or of a spiritualised Christianity. She became its ardent advocate, and declared that spiritism could be *the religion* substituted for all other religions. This is how she expressed her thought :

"Humanity is an immense edifice in which each religion represents a window, great or small, by

which enters the *same* sun. All the men in the building are at one or other of the windows, and quarrel among themselves, pretending that one window allows more light than the other, and claiming that the true light cannot enter except through the window at which they are.

“ The mission of spiritism is to break down the walls between the windows.”

Evidently the spiritists have the pretension of building a new religion on the ruins of Catholicism, and their violent language against Christian dogma clearly reveals their plans and their hopes.

The spirits agree with the spirit who revealed to Allan Kardec his mission: two things must be done—demolish and build.

The delegate from Holland, at the International Congress of 1900, said: “ Christianity shall be perfected by spiritism, but not the Christianity of churches, of dogmas, and of rites. . . . Then there shall be no more priests, no more scruples of conscience! Then no more blind leaders, no more adoration of the authority of a book, no more confessionalism, no more dogmatic system, no more infallibility of a man or of a book.”

The preacher delegate calls this a purified and simplified Christianity. He has but to listen to the tables and to others to know where that purified and simplified Christianity would lead to.

CHAPTER XVII

THE EFFECTS OF SPIRITISTIC PRACTICES ON THE INDIVIDUAL AND ON SOCIETY

IN the opinion of competent authorities, such as Dr J. Lapponi and others, spiritistic practices present, both for society and for the individual, all the dangers and all the ravages of hypnotism, none excluded, and some of them magnified a thousand times; they offer no advantage in return, if we except the paltry one of an indirect proof of the existence of the supernatural, which may be demonstrated in various other ways.

For a thorough understanding of the consequences of spiritism on the individual as on society, a brief exposition of the evils of hypnotism will not be amiss. We shall not at present enter upon any theological consideration of the subject, but simply give an exposition of facts.

“ In as far as society is concerned,” says Dr Lapponi, “ hypnotism is full of dangers, not only because it multiplies the diseases of the nervous

system, but also because use and abuse may be made of it to the detriment of the right relations of society towards the individual, and of the individual towards society. By placing an individual in a state of lethargy or catalepsy, he may be made a victim, without power of resistance, to the passions, covetousness, and ambitions of others. Many crimes have been committed against morality, personal safety, and public duties, by a subject, precisely by bringing upon him one of these hypnotic conditions. By placing a man in a state of somnambulism, and through concomitant suggestion, it is easy to disturb harmony in the family, to cause aversion and implacable hatred, to compel the subject to unjust acts, such as donations, wills, acknowledgment of debts never contracted, to written declarations of paternity where no such relations exist, to promises of marriage, to recognition of illegitimate children, to refusal of the duties of citizenship, to false law-suits, lying denunciations, perjured testimony, to the commission of atrocious crimes, such as murder, poisoning, infanticide, arson, political revolt, revelation of imaginary crimes, and attributing them to innocent parties for the purpose of putting justice on the wrong track."

It sometimes does happen that the suggestion is not carried out owing to the good qualities of the

individual, when awakened, but this is in spite of the hypnotiser.

Doctors tell us that hypnotism may very rarely be of benefit in individual cases, and only when it is carefully made use of by a professional in the treatment of certain cases of paralysis, of hysteric contractions, or of obstinate affections of the great nervous centres. Spiritism is of no use in that regard.

Whether in the interest of the community at large any revelations obtained from a hypnotised subject would be a real help to justice in finding offenders, is indeed very questionable. Spiritism on this score would be worse than useless, as the author of the revelations is the father of lies.

One of the first sad effects of spiritism is for all Christians the *loss of faith*, the hardening of the heart, and the eternal wreck of the soul. We know already what the teaching of the spirits is in regard to religion: they sometimes say that all creeds are bad, or again that all are good, except Catholicism, to which they bear a special hatred. It is clear that the spirits do not from the very beginning reveal their evil plans and desires; they proceed slowly to be surer of the result. They first attempt to spur curiosity, to satisfy their clients on unimportant things; so for anyone wishing to speak with a dear deceased friend, they imitate his

voice and manners during life. If one has lost something he will sometimes, with the aid of the talking tables, find it; occasionally a remedy may be suggested for particular ailments. So far the operators do not detect or suspect anything harmful or bad. Thinking that the spirits heard are really the souls of their dear friends, they freely imbibe their teaching and ideas.

The mania to know and the curiosity to see marvellous things gain in intensity; séances grow more frequent; more complicated questions are asked concerning future life—the state of the souls after death, the happiness they enjoy, and their ultimate destiny. The entertainment grows ever more fascinating; they are amazed at the answers, they become desirous of the life of the spirits, who, they say, by successive incarnations, are purified until their perfect union with God.

The spirits often mingle this doctrine with some good points, such as recommending the love of God and of one's neighbour, or the practice of piety, until by degrees they pose as real guides in spiritual life. With such guides Christian ideals naturally grow dim; doubt enters the mind; certain fundamental duties are soon sacrificed for the spiritistic conception of future life without an eternal hell; and the wreck is complete.

With the hardening or the total extinction of

religious sentiment is associated the loss of the sentiment of decency, and a wide road is opened to all sorts of dissipation. If anyone desires to have proofs of this fact, he will find them in the work of Des Mousseaux and other authoritative writers; we refrain from expatiating on the subject.

Equally frightful are the effects of spiritistic practices on the health of the body. Dr Lapponi,¹ the private physician of Leo XIII., says: "Many of the most famous mediums, and not a few of the regular attendants at spiritistic séances, have died insane, or neuropathics, or victims of progressive paralysis."

The first of these effects is *obsession*, that is, as Kardec² puts it, the dominion of the spirits over certain persons. The great ringleader of spiritism would not call it *possession* for two reasons: first, because this would imply belief in the Christian teaching about devils, as if there existed spirits continually bent upon evil, and who could not mend their ways, which is, of course, against the fundamental principles of spiritism. Secondly, because possession would imply taking bodily possession of, a sort of cohabitation by the spirits, when there is only constraint.

Kardec adds that when the inferior or wicked

¹ Dr J. Lapponi: "Ipnotismo e Spiritismo," p. 229.

² "Livres des Médiums," chap. xxiii.

spirits succeed in obtaining dominion over anyone, they identify themselves with his own spirit, and lead him as a child.

Kardec divides obsession into three kinds—*simple obsession*, *fascination*, and *subjugation*.

Simple obsession occurs when a wicked spirit prevails upon a medium, interferes with the communications which he receives, prevents communication with other spirits, and takes the place of those called up. In cases of obsession the medium is fully aware of the fact that he is dealing with a lying spirit, and the spirit, on the other hand, does not disguise his intentions.

Fascination has more serious consequences. It is an illusion produced by a direct act of the spirit upon the mind of the medium, paralysing, as it were, his judgment; illusion may go so far as to make sublime what is simply ridiculous. No spiritist seems exempted from this kind of obsession. The spirit leads the fascinated person about as he would a blind man, makes him accept the most absurd doctrines and theories as the only expression of truth; furthermore he may lead him to take ridiculous, hazardous, and even dangerous steps.

Subjugation is a yoke paralysing the will of the bearer, and causes him to act against his will. Subjugation may be *moral* or *corporeal*. In the

first case the subjugated person is led to conclusions and acts often absurd and compromising, which he considers quite reasonable. In the second case, the spirit acts on the bodily organs, and provokes involuntary movements.

Writing mediums, when under the influence of the spirit, want to be always writing; when there is no pen or pencil at hand, they attempt to write with the finger, wherever they be. This irresistible force puts the victim through the most ridiculous performances; it may cause him to fall on his knees before a lady, whom he has never met, and propose marriage, or to kneel on the streets and kiss the ground.

We claim that the obsessed persons of Kardec are simply *possessed* by the devil.

Rationalists, as well as spiritists, hate the expression; they would have us believe that *possessions* are morbid, natural phenomena, like epilepsy, insanity, hysteria, and other diseases, which science in days gone by was unable to diagnose; that the miracles of Christ in freeing the possessed—as they are recorded in Scripture—are mere forms of speech adapted to the way of thinking of his contemporaries. These theories are absurd.

We grant that there are diseases in which the symptoms are similar to the ordinary signs of posses-

sion, but this only proves either that the devil may produce known bodily diseases, or can produce a morbid state, given certain organic conditions or predispositions, of which he avails himself to take possession of the individual. We hear sometimes : “ He has the devil in him,” to express that so-and-so knows of no peace or rest, and seems in continual agitation; but this does not signify by any means that he is possessed by the devil.

When the evangelists mention facts of possession, they do not intend to speak of people otherwise afflicted, but attribute their very afflictions to the presence of the devils within them. The sacred writers make a clear distinction between the two classes. St Matthew says: His fame went throughout all Syria, and they presented to Him all *sick* people that were taken with divers *diseases* and torments, and such as were *possessed* by the devil (iv. 24). A great multitude were come to hear Him, and to be healed of their *diseases*. And they that were *troubled with unclean spirits* were cured (Luke vi. 18). When the evangelists say that Jesus *cured* the demoniacs, they say so either because the disease was the result of possession and needed cure, or that the cure was the most sensible and visible sign of the expulsion of the demons.

It does not take the experienced eye of a physician to know that the characteristics or signs of possession, as recorded by the evangelists, do not apply to normal diseases. To throw the patient on the ground as soon as he is cured, or that the devils are expelled from him (Luke iv. 35), to become as dead, when cured (Mark. ix. 25), to have the supposed disease from the body of man pass into a herd of swine (Matt. viii. 31-32), are no symptoms by which physicians will diagnose a natural disease.

That Christ in curing the demoniacs—as related in the Bible—merely conformed to the manner of seeing and thinking of the people, is equally absurd. How can we suppose that Christ played the hypocrite, pretending to expel devils, when in reality He simply cured ordinary diseases? If among the people there existed false beliefs concerning possession, Christ would undoubtedly have rectified their mistake instead of confirming it, as He did in the case of the man born blind (John ix. 2-4). Not only did Jesus cure the demoniacs, but He gave explicit instructions to His Apostles about possessions, and He conferred upon them, upon the seventy-two disciples, and upon all who should believe in Him, the power to cast out devils. Christ therefore admitted real possession.

The Catholic Church continues to make use of

the power conferred upon her by her founder. In her hierarchy she has a special order of clerics, called exorcists. Her ritual gives the signs of possession. These signs are the following: to speak an unknown language, or understand one speaking it; to reveal distant and hidden objects; to show superior strength than age or other conditions would guarantee. The more there are of these signs present, the stronger the indications of possession.

In spiritism all these signs are found, and many more, as we have explained in the preceding chapters.

As the cause of the spiritistic phenomena is Satan and his angels, it is clear that the medium is really possessed by the devil; the medium is the means whereby the devils act in producing the extraordinary phenomena in spiritism. Between the two there must be an explicit or implicit agreement, enabling the devil to do as he pleases. In séances without a medium there is at least an implicit agreement with the lying and deceiving spirit.

In the casting out of devils the ritual prescribes that the exorcist order the devil to say whether he dwells in that body by virtue of a magical operation (such as an agreement would be), or through signs of sorcery or written pact. Besides the danger of

being for ever possessed by the devil, there are various other evil effects of spiritism concerning physical health.

“ Spiritism blunts or abnormally exalts the mental faculties, and thereby produces very serious nervous troubles,” says Dr Lapponi.

When the craze of the turning tables came in vogue, there were a great number of cases of nervous excitement or exhaustion among those who formed the chains. Sometimes indeed these effects were only temporary, but often permanent, and with the saddest consequences. The sight of the turning tables is known to have brought about in children nervous attacks, commonly called St Vitus’s dance. Mirville assures us that many patients were sent to the insane asylum at Bicêtre for over-indulgence in spiritistic practices. Victor Henaquin tells us that the nervous shocks at these séances unbalanced the mind of his wife, and she never recovered. Eliphas Levi, the great spiritist, known the world over, takes the same view; he assures us that it may produce not only insanity, but many other terrible and incurable diseases. When the poor sufferer is aware of it, congestion of the brain generally ends his life. Kardec himself recognises the fact that insanity is one of the consequences of spiritistic practices. (See his “ Livre des Médiums,” chap. xix.)

Suicide is frequently recommended by the spirits. They describe in detail the happiness of a human soul in its successive incarnations in space and in other worlds; they instil in the minds of those who consult them the desire for a happier life, and suggest suicide as the road to it. They may advise them directly to free themselves of their bodies in order to be united with an army of other spirits, who are in the enjoyment of a better world.

These unfortunates have previously acquired the firm conviction that there is no eternal hell, and that a better world awaits them; suicide is presented to them as an act of charity to themselves, as an act of obedience to the voice of the spirits. They follow the poor deluded fanatics who throw themselves under the car of juggernaut, to please their god Vishnu, or who, at a sign from the Old Man of the mountain, precipitate themselves into an abyss in order to find the luxuries of Mahomet's paradise. The advising spirit in all these instances is the same—Satan and his emissaries.

Spiritists and physicians give us, in addition to the above, another list of the sad consequences of spiritism. They are fearful and obstinate cases of headache, palpitation of the heart and other cardiac affections, nervous diseases, and more especially neurasthenia, emaciation, suffocation,

prostration leading to consumption, alteration in the composition of the blood, bringing about sure and premature death.

Tertullian, in his time, spoke of the dangers of spiritism as we do now. "Many know," he says, "that through the work of the demons they die premature and atrocious deaths, which are attributable to them"; he was speaking of spiritists and magicians, whom we now call mediums.

Another fact thoroughly ascertained is this, that spiritists, and especially mediums, die suddenly, while acting at a spiritistic séance. Spiritism has an explanation for this, as for all other curious occurrences. Here it is. In materialised apparitions the spirits do not wish to be disturbed, nor do they permit any lack of decorum, which often results in grave injury to the life of the medium, who not seldom is struck dead on the spot. That is why the spiritists take the precaution of warning new beginners against any kind of ill manners, for fear of incurring the implacable displeasure of the spirits.

When we consider the surprising occurrences at a spiritistic séance, we can readily imagine that they must tell on the nervous system. At the present time, when weakness of the nerves or neurasthenia is a complaint so common in civilised communities, any unusual, surprising, or unex-

pected occurrence which strikes us intensely must necessarily excite the nervous system, and cause a depression, which directly or indirectly affects the brain. The sudden sight of a mouse, a rat, a snake, or a sudden alarm, or an ill-advised trick has often brought about convulsions, epilepsy, various forms of hysteria, or St Vitus's dance. Can it be otherwise at a spiritistic séance, when, as soon as the chain is formed, those present feel themselves the plaything of an occult agent, who upsets the whole room, takes the chairs from under them, pulls their hair, passes cold or warm hands over their faces, plays, causes a number of sparks or luminous globes to appear, embraces whom he pleases? A constitution of iron would hardly prove immune.

CHAPTER XVIII

SPIRITISM FROM A THEOLOGIAN'S POINT OF VIEW

SOUND reason compels man to believe in the existence of a personal God, the beginning of all things, to Whom he owes his being, by Whom his being is continued, on Whom he depends not only for being itself but also for his actions. His total dependence on God compels man to recognise God's supreme dominion over him, as also the necessity of serving Him. This recognition is called religion. Man therefore must naturally have religion.

Sound reason also tells us that this personal God is goodness itself, without any admixture of evil, good in Himself and good to us; that He created man for a purpose, a last end, which cannot be other than the possession of Himself. Therefore man must tend to that last end by recognising the goodness of God, and by loving what He loves, namely, God above all things, and all other things on account of God. The recognition or protesta-

tion of this love, by which man shows himself ever ready for any service which God may demand, is religion. Is it not then natural to profess religion?

Again, since God is our last end, and since we cannot fully possess him in this life, we must *hope* to possess Him hereafter. But since life hereafter belongs to the supernatural order, we cannot attain it by our natural efforts; we need God's help for it. To recognise that this help will not be denied us, and that by its proper use we shall ultimately attain the end, is another proof of religion. How natural!

Since then we are obliged to believe in God, to love Him, and to hope in Him, we are bound to practise religion, of which faith, hope, and charity are the foundations. These duties are so clear, so natural, that we cannot consistently deny them. Yet as a subject may rebel against and be a traitor to his own country, so man, endowed with liberty, may rebel against his God, and refuse to discharge the duties which religion imposes.

The contrary of religion is either irreligion or superstition. Irreligion is the vice whereby we dishonour God either in Himself or in things which have a special reference to Him, such as blasphemy, tempting God, perjury, and sacrilege. Superstition is a vice whereby man performs divine worship in an undue manner, or gives it to

whom it does not belong. Judaism is now superstition because it worships God with a false cult. Idolatry, divination, and vain observance give to a creature the honour which belongs to God alone. Idolatry gives it to an imaginary deity or to creatures. *Demonolatry*, or devil worship, is one kind of idolatry. A devil worshipper is not only he who offers sacrifices to him, or adores him, or swears by him, but also he who calls upon him for assistance in knowing or doing anything. To invoke the devil's assistance in order to know something, is called *divination*, to do something, *vain observance*.

The invocation of the devil's assistance may be either expressed or tacit. Divination is the unfolding of hidden things with the help of the devil. The chief variety of this is *necromancy*, or the calling upon the devil that he may reveal future things through apparitions of the dead.

The calling of the devil's help to do marvellous things is called *magic*. We have proved that the cause of the marvellous spiritistic phenomena is the devil. All ancient and modern spiritistic practices have no other scope than to obtain by the aid of the spirit of evil wonderful results, which surpass the efficiency of natural causes. For the purpose of knowing the future, spiritism gives to the devil a cult, which it denies to God, the Creator

of all things. Spiritism is therefore nothing else but superstition in its worse form, and this is the reason why it is bad in itself. We need not wonder then that it has been condemned at all times, in the old dispensation as well as in the new. In the Old Testament God had expressly forbidden it, and visited with severe punishments those who were guilty of such practices.

When the chosen people of Israel were about to enter into the promised land, God commanded them: Beware lest thou have a mind to imitate the abominations of those nations (the Canaanites, the Amorites, etc.). Neither let there be found among you anyone . . . that *consulteth soothsayers*, or observeth dreams or omens, neither let there be any wizard. Nor *charmer*, nor *anyone that consulteth pythonic spirits*, or *fortune-tellers*, or that seeketh the truth *from the dead*. For the Lord *abhorreth* all these things, and for these abominations he will destroy them at thy coming (Deut. xviii. 9-12). The soul that shall go aside after *magicians* and *soothsayers* and shall commit fornication with them, I will set my face against that soul, and destroy it out of the midst of its people (Lev. xx. 6). A man or a woman, in whom there is a *pythonical* or *divining spirit*, dying let them die; they shall stone them; their blood is upon them (Lev. xx. 27).

How could the Lord be more explicit in condemning the calling up of the souls of the dead, from whom the truth is sought? All those who take part in the proceedings as abettors (of evocation) are equally guilty. The old magicians who had a pythical or divining spirit were those who presided at the communication with the dead. What difference—except in name—is there between them and our modern mediums? As the Lord abhorred the magicians, so He abhors the mediums, because they are one and the same thing.

The old necromancy, or divination by means of the dead, is the spiritism of to-day with this difference, that necromancers believed the spirit addressed to be in reality the devil, with whom they had direct communication, whereas modern spiritists believe or try to believe explicitly or implicitly that the same spirits are the souls of the dead. The necromancers were hated and held in abomination by all, and practised their art secretly. The spiritists, on the contrary, raise their heads, are supposed to be entitled to esteem and honour, and hold their meetings more or less publicly.

In the New Testament we read that St Paul struck Elymas, the magician, with blindness. When St Paul was preaching at Ephesus, he converted many magicians, who brought together their books and burnt them before all (Acts xix. 19).

Tradition records what punishment St Peter inflicted upon Simon the magician, as a proof of the Apostle's abhorrence of magic.

The Catholic Church has always been the faithful keeper and vindicator of the teaching entrusted to it by its founder. Its special mission is to protect its adherents from error, so it must condemn spiritism. At all times it has enacted special legislation against spiritism under whatever name it happened to be known.

The sovereign pontiffs have always raised their voices and with all their authority condemned these communications with the devil. John XXII. did so in 1326, Leo X. in 1521, Adrian VI. in 1522, Innocent VIII. in 1584, Sextus V. in 1585, Gregory XV. in 1623. John XXII. said: "We have noticed with sorrow that many, Christians by name only, having left the one light of the truth, have had their minds so darkened with error that they ask questions of the devils and receive answers from them."

The Church further empowers ecclesiastical superiors, within their jurisdiction, to pronounce the sentence of excommunication against those who are guilty of such crimes.

The Catholic will understand that a crime which the Church punishes with this extreme measure must be a most grievous sin. Ignorance in this, as

in everything else, may be an excuse; but anyone knowing the malice of the act, and assisting at a spiritistic séance, and thereby communicating with the spirit of lies and evil, is guilty of a serious transgression of the first commandment.

The Catholic Church strikes with excommunication—the absolution from which is reserved to the Pope—any and all of its members who become heretics, under whatever name or sect they may hide themselves, and also their abettors. Who can deny that the spirits of spiritism teach very many heresies? Kardec's vocabulary is a proof of it. Their rejection of the divinity of Christ, of the eternity of the pains of hell, are instances of it. Whoever therefore knowingly and publicly professes or teaches similar heresies is by the fact itself a heretic, and consequently cut off from the Church.

To allow spiritistic séances in one's house, or in any way to encourage the spread of spiritism, is undoubtedly abetting heresy, and draws excommunication upon the guilty party.

In his constitution, "*Officiorum ac munerum*," Leo XIII. forbade the faithful to publish, read, or keep books in which magic and the communication with spirits, or other similar superstitions, are taught or commended.

In 1856 the Supreme Tribunal of the Holy Office,

when questioned about certain phenomena of somnambulism and clairvoyance—which are identical with the manifestations of modern spiritism—replied, by command of Pope Pius IX.: “To call up the souls of the dead, and to receive answers from them, to manifest things unknown and distant, and to perform similar acts of superstition, is a deception absolutely unlawful, heretical, and scandalous.”

The reason why these acts are absolutely unlawful and heretical is not far to seek. It is certainly offering to God a grievous insult to treat with the devil, although he may sometimes present himself under the form of a departed soul, and to ask him for information which Almighty God does not vouchsafe to give. It is equally clear that the above practices, even our very assistance at a spiritistic séance are a scandal, not only because our presence encourages others to commit acts damnable in themselves, but also because these séances open wide the door for moral and intellectual depravation. Curiosity is in this case no better excuse than it would be for entering an immoral resort.

The faithful cannot fail to appreciate the propriety of the stringent laws enacted by the Church on the subject. Faith is the greatest blessing for us wayfarers upon earth. It is the ever shining

torch, the sure guide in all things concerning the future life. Enemies have not been wanting at any time to rob the faithful of that precious gift. They may have appeared under different forms, but the purpose of Arianism in the beginning, or of spiritism in modern times, is practically the same. The Church has ever defended the doctrine it received from its divine founder, and warned its children of dangers ahead. It has stigmatised dogmatic error whenever it appeared, and will continue to safeguard the deposit of faith against all new-comers. The faith of the last Christian upon earth shall be the same as that of the first.

For those who deny the supernatural, and fail to give a logical explanation of the spiritistic phenomena, the only door of escape is their ignorance. They flatter themselves with the thought that the future may reveal new physical laws, of which no one has an inkling now. We do not deny that the future may have surprises in store for us, that possibly new physical and physiological laws may be discovered; but we do deny that the future will *reverse* the certainties of the present. We know enough of spiritism to say that many of its certainly known facts are in evident contradiction with laws demonstrated with mathematical accuracy, and therefore beyond discussion. It is absurd to say that laws will ever be discovered in opposition to

these, because that would mean the end of the world, as it is.

To the inflated and godless modern scientist it seems learned to deny the existence of the preternatural, but the phantom is always before him; chased through the door, it enters by the window. It is not the object of the senses, it cannot be analysed or weighed like a corpse, but is that a reason for denying its existence? If it were, we should deny all rational and logical truth, which never is the object of the senses; in that case we would present the sorry figure of pretending to explain all, and at the same time profess to know nothing.

The question may be asked why God allows the evil spirits to mystify and ruin so many, as is done through spiritism?

The divine husbandman allows wheat and cockle on his field until the time of harvest, but will not allow the wheat to be choked by the cockle. He has given man free will, He offers the Christian the assistance of His grace, with the aid of which he can do—like St Paul—all things. The Christian may be tempted, but with the help of God he shall not fall; his courage is strengthened in every encounter with the evil one, each victory won is a jewel in his crown. In his fight with spiritism he should not yield to a temptation of sinful curiosity,

but abstain from all participation in its practices, and be faithful to his Christian duties. Neglect on his part will blunt his intellect and harden his heart, and bring with it the punishment of possibly becoming a plaything in the hands of his enemies.

To a good many people an appeal to revelation does not look sufficiently scientific. Yet what is science if not the knowledge of a thing in its cause? The Church shows us the real cause of certain well-known spiritistic phenomena. The theories advanced by our learned positivists do not, as we have seen, prove anything. Who acts, then, the part of the real scientist?

It is a mistake to imagine that spiritism is anything new, other than in name. We know sufficiently what it is to abhor and shun it as inimical to the individual and to society, as an insult to God, and as the work of the evil one.

It seems to us, without stretching conclusions too far, that modern spiritism may be regarded as the first apparition of the last heresy, which is to work such havoc and prove even a real danger to the chosen souls at the end of the world. Spiritism endeavours to substitute the diabolical superhuman to the divine supernatural.

Error has its progressions. Rationalism succeeded to the religious revolution of the sixteenth

century; it will itself be resolved slowly but surely into a gross pantheism, into a masked idolatry, into a superstition fostered by diabolical visions and revelations, exactly as the Apostles foretold when speaking of the last days.

THE END

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